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Queen of the Prots

Among the more sophisticated justifications for Jubilee Year is the argument that the monarchy as an institution – and the Queen as a person – provide a focus for national loyalty. It is, and she is, a force for unity at a time when there are many occasions for division: so the argument runs. In fact, the argument does not prove that we need a Queen. But it may be granted that since we have a Queen, and since she differs from most of her predecessors in possessing no effective powers and manifesting no political partisanship, she is equipped to serve this purpose.

Yes, that may be granted – in Britain. Britain is not in the accurate sense a nation (the nations are England, Scotland and Wales) but it is a unitary state with a fairly long history of civic peace based on general consent. Even today, when parties with significant popular support in Scotland and Wales are demanding political independence, they seem well disposed toward retaining the monarchy as a bond. Should Scots and Welsh independence become a reality, the Queen might be the accepted centrepiece of an island Commonwealth more solid than the rather notional Commonwealth which reaches from Belize to Hongkong.

Ireland has, all along, been entirely different. Her attachment to Britain was continuously resented and tenaciously resisted. Largely from the outset, and overwhelmingly since the time of Parnell, Irishmen elected to Westminster stood apart from the parties dominant in England, Scotland and Wales, and devoted all their energies to breaking the bonds of union. One of those bonds, resented as much as any other, is inevitably the monarchy. Since 1920, the newly autonomous Northern Ireland has been unrecognised by Irishmen elsewhere and by a minority within the prescribed area because it is a place where the Crown is the supreme authority. To sum up: as a unitary state commanding general consent, the United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland did not function, and the United Kingdom of Britain and Northern Ireland has not functioned either.

Loyalty to the Queen, therefore, is a sentiment felt and asserted only by one community in Northern Ireland – the Protestants whose social, political and economic supremacy is inextricable from union with Britain. It is not felt, indeed it is totally rejected, by the Catholic community who form one-third of the population. Sadly but inevitably, it follows that the monarchy – far from being a unitary factor transcending other antagonisms – is a divisive factor, which intensifies those antagonisms whenever it is forced into prominence. The Queen is quite simply the Queen of the Protestants, just as the Union Jack is their flag and what we call the national anthem is their party song. Her existence, her pronouncements and her occasional visits serve, and can only serve, to stress that Unionism is the dominant system and the Protestants the dominant community.

This, above all, is the reason why a royal visit to Ulster cannot be an occasion for flowers, harmless ceremonial and fun for the kids. It is a political act, sanctioning a policy and conferring favour on a political force; even the guest-lists at the receptions make that plain. In time of peace it might have passed off without rousing many passions. Catholics would have shrugged and stayed at home, and that would have been that. But today, when Catholics render themselves suspect and are often victimised by their refusal to yield allegiance to the system with which the Queen is identified, it must be both provocative and inflammatory. The tactlessness or stupidity of the timing – just after the anniversary of internment, an emotive occasion for Catholics, and just before the Derry march, a day of vindictive triumph for Protestants – makes matters worse. The increase in the army of occupation, the wasteful expense, and the security precautions which interfere with the daily lives of thousands (mostly Catholics, of course) make matters worse too. The risk of tragic incidents was never justifiable. However, even if sighs of relief are breathed on Friday and short-sighted functionaries count the visit as a triumph, its unwisdom should have been seen long ago. Long after it is over, the visit will be remembered as a symbol of the attitudes which make peace in Northern Ireland so hard to attain.

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Spotlight on Politics

Fred Inglis

Patriotism and the Left

There was once an excellently funny Gary Cooper movie in which the star played an elaborate parody of himself called Mr Unsmiling Jones. Jones's face was thin-lipped and never moved, opposed either by insults or affection. He might well have been mistaken for a socialist – for the Left has never laughed much. In an old ad. for the original Cudlipp *Sun*, Tony Hancock remarked with bitter lugubriousness upon the unfortunate connotations of maternity ward and convict quarry in the word 'Labour'. And it is true that all non-political people, as well as plenty at Blackpool and Brighton, think that the party not only has nothing to do with laughter, delight, joy, gaiety (*sic*), but is positively identified with the economic and moral austerities of Stafford Cripps and the winter of 1947: food queues, heavy rain, the smell of wet mackintoshes in drab welfare offices, thin coaldust fires, and a clogged, catarrhal dose of the miseries.

We could do with a slightly merrier and rubicund hagiology. The greatest writers in English have been, along with everything else, *funny*. Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Wordsworth, Charles Dickens. William Morris was an immensely jovial and large-spirited man. Since his day Labour politicians seem to have got stuck in the wet with a lowering snuffle. At best, like Ernie Bevin, they make you laugh by being bitingly nasty. Mostly, they gloom on. No one could say that either Jack Jones or Hugh Scanlon, for all that you'd think it *was* Al Read on the radio, is one long laugh. Harold was once, but then became a consultant statesman and a pompous ass. And since 1964 not a grin to be seen in the cabinet, except on Mike Yarwood's Ted Heath. The rest of them are earnest, worthy, prating, reasonable, but quite without the gusto, the large-spirited, generous response to politics and all its absurdity of a man or woman who laughs well.

And all the same goes for patriotism. The patriotic figures of the national imagination emerge as a sort of cross between Falstaff and G. K. Chesterton to the tune of Edward Elgar, thrown in with a dash of Churchill, who was notoriously very bad-tempered. A sort of fat, beer-swilling, back-slapping hearty with a noisy disposition, kind to animals and his mother, and quick to enlist as soon as the call comes. The Left for 50 years or so has been actively associated with anti-patriotism. Nasty weather and no coal goes along with world worker-unity and a view of patriotic loyalties as so much petty-bourgeois, false consciousness baggage.

I want to argue that socialism and patriotism must, and do, go together. It's easy to see how the other view cropped up. Patriotic sentiment in this country dug itself so deep into the tramlines of Victorian and Edwardian England, into General Gordon, Kipling, Mafeking, by jingo and the Old Contemptibles, that any rational man had to deride it out of his head. The ruling class picture of Britain was confined to the Home Counties (revealing name), the cathedrals, Queen Anne houses, and lovely parklands which were the possessions of our masters.

Subverting this postcard picture of England meant rejecting the versions of patriotism which upheld it. So instead of English patriotism OK, almost any other kind was OK so long as it supported a liberation front. The Vietcong were clearly impelled far more by patriotism than Marxism; Ho Chi Minh's great theoretical triumph was to make the two compatible. The same was true of the Algerian NLF. Castro affirms the same in *History Will Absolve Me*. So did the rebels of Budapest in 1956. So do the Welsh, the Scots, the Irish, the Bretons, the Basques, the Icelanders, the Eritreans, the Israelis, today. In all these cases, the political leaders understood that patriotism was the strongest binding feeling and value amongst their supporters. And in so doing, they showed not only a proper acumen but also a democratic respect for working-class consciousness.

During the second world war, it was clear that all class sentiment, along with inevitable local cynicism, was patriotic. That is the reason why the Dunkirk spirit can still be so cheaply invoked. It is probably true to say that there is still a good deal of trans-class patriotism about, and that the Jubilee had some point not just in providing some sort of national symbolism to hold people together, but also by providing an excuse, like the 1951 Festival, for a party. But it is also true that, according to the off-the-peg explanations of national decline – the loss of the Empire, the crisis of capitalism, the pussyfooting around the EEC, the power of the US, the robber barons of the multinationals, the Genghis Khans of the oil countries – all these have eroded British patriotism to a very marked degree. It has become unclear to people what they would be defending in their country if they had to. Insofar as they have lost their pride in the way they are, they have lost their social identity.

What should a socialist party in Britain say about patriotism? First, it should distinguish patriotism firmly from nationalism. Nationalism isn't pride in the things which give a society its self-respect, the public valuing of the good things which it does well, the way it keeps itself upright. It is sour and rancorous and seeks to justify its own acquisitiveness. Its aggression is just the other side of its self-pity. Its strongest feeling is hatred.

You can see this in some forms of Welsh and Scottish nationalist activity. That blindly hating assertiveness would blow up and sabotage in the name of a separatism gathered cosily about the stone croft, the bard, the snood, and the spinning wheel. How they would bring this about, what the regime and its politics would really be like, can wait until after that doom has cracked. The Nationalists of the United Kingdom have a moral-political world-picture about on the level of a Hobbit.

A proper patriotism is another, far finer thing. A proper patriotism in Britain would name for what it is the country's admirable gentleness and peaceability. It would honour the construction of the social welfare institutions, the comprehensive schools, the best new towns, the universities, the medical system (in spite of the BMA), the BBC (in spite of everything). It would cherish the absence, outside Belfast, of guns in the street, of a secret police, the clear presence in every mild, downcast British face of a strong sense of freedom, of independent bloody-mindedness, of sheer safety.

But patriotism isn't simply a name for nostalgia. The kind I'm recommending isn't regressive; it's an impulse towards a future certain to be difficult, but not certain to be deadly. A patriotic stance towards the future would hold things steady, not spiral into more awful changes (like the obtusely unpatriotic changes in the counties). It would be visible not in the amorphous regions bureaucracy assigns us to, but in the real towns and counties to which people give allegiance – an allegiance given meaning by cricket and football teams, brass bands, and festival days. Such a pride in place would then be able to countenance forms of federation and even secession, because it would know what it is worth to itself. And being worth it, would blow away at the same time the high reek of corruption which hangs over the Labour progeny in so many county halls. In the name not of living standards but of justice and equality, we should see that everyone has a decent home to live in (and why not his own?). Finally, a patriotic country would want to recover its dishonoured name abroad, and to stand out cleanly against the deadly enemies, black or white, of the values it seeks to embody. Such entries would make a feasible, believable, keepable set of promises in a manifesto. Three years ago they did.

James Fenton is on holiday.

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Murray Sayle

Playing the Flash-Bang Game

Last week in Hiroshima, the 32nd anniversary – how time slips by! – it was business as usual. The pigeons in the Peace Park have now returned from their yearly performance as the Flight of Peace Doves to being ordinary birds. The special stocks of ice-cream, popcorn and hot-dogs have been eaten. The Atomic Bombing Victims' Association has issued its yearly demand for increased compensation payments to keep up with Japanese inflation.

All this bustle is what the Hiroshima people, practical like all Japanese, call the *pikadon shobei*, the 'flash-bang business'. It is Hiroshima's major industry, along with the factory which makes Mazda motor-cars. Out of deference to local sentiment, Hiroshima has no atomic installations, but gets most of its power from the 460 Mw. boiling-water reactor at Shimane, on the other side of the island of Honshu.

Japan's nuclear industry has a history of high hopes, continually frustrated by the turn of events. Even as the *Enola Gay* was making its approach run over Hiroshima, Professor Bunsaku Arakatsu was hard at work in the physics laboratory of Kyoto University, trying to separate U-235 by the centrifuge method for the Japanese atomic bomb which was going to destroy the American invasion fleet as it approached the Japanese home islands. The Japanese Navy guessed that a laboratory in Kyoto stood a good chance of not being bombed, and they were right – President Truman himself ordered Kyoto with its artistic treasures taken off the list of Japanese cities to be atom-bombed, and Nagasaki, the traditional centre of Japanese Christianity, put in its place.

August 1945 ended Japan's first efforts in the flash-bang business, and the physicists who had worked on it dispersed, and only gradually came back into the industry, attracted by the possibility of a cheap and inexhaustible supply of power for Japanese factories. One of the wartime group, Professor Shinichiro Tomonaga, won the Nobel Prize for his post-war work on nuclear power generation. Japan's first experimental reactor went critical in July 1957, and there are now 13 commercial reactors in operation with an installed capacity of 7.43 million Kw. After October 1973, nuclear power, as an Arab-proof source of basic energy seemed even more attractive, and grandiose schemes were advanced to boost this total to 60 million Kw., which is to say a fifth of Japan's electricity needs, by 1985.

Japan's arrangements for fuel, enrichment and reprocessing were characteristically neat and world-wide. Contracts were signed mainly with Australia and Canada for uranium yellowcake to be delivered through the 1980s. The US was going to do the enrichment, while Britain agreed to take on the reprocessing, thus transferring the awkward problem of dumping poisonous atomic waste from the overcrowded and sensitive Japanese islands to the wide open spaces of Cumbria. A specially-built ship, the *Levan Fisher* (James Fisher and Sons, Barrow-in-Furness) does nothing else but shuttle back and forth twice a year on this atom-age garbage round.

But the Japanese also looked ahead. Japan needs not just power, but reliable and above all cheap power. If only naturally occurring U-235 enriched to 4 per cent or so is to be used in nuclear power reactors, then the world total reserve of uranium only amounts to one-twentieth of the known fossil fuel deposits, in energy terms. So as early as 1967 Japan started work on a prototype fast breeder reactor to convert the remaining 97 per cent of natural uranium into energy, via the plu-

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tonium route. This is supposed to go critical in 1982.

Japan resumed work on the centrifuge method of uranium enrichment, hastily abandoned in August 1945, in 1964 and is now operating its first experimental 400-drum cascade with another one nearing completion. To complete the cycle, Japan's first reprocessing facility has been completed with French technology and is ready to start work with a throughput of 0.7 tons of uranium a day. Already, Japan has in stock a ton of plutonium oxide/uranium oxide suitable for the fast-breeder reactor and more than ten tons of the same mixed oxide for its planned purchase of two Candu heavy water reactors. Or, to put it bluntly, enough fissionable material to make 500 of the plutonium bombs which devastated Nagasaki.

Yellowcake Suspicions

It is on this issue that Japan's nuclear planning has started to come unstuck. Without the plutonium option, nuclear power is too expensive and unreliable for Japan's needs, and already the Japanese can see an OPEC-like cartel being formed in Australia, Canada and the United States to force up the price of yellowcake. As veterans in more than one sense of the flash-bang game, the Japanese nuclear industry sees a close link between the price cartel and the sanctimonious busybodying over nuclear safeguards. In the Anglo-Saxon minds of the uranium suppliers, the distinction is clear – but how do you explain to a Japanese the fine line which divides, for instance, Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd, the Canadian Crown Corporation, which both makes and markets the Candu reactor, and the Eldorado Corporation, another Canadian Crown Corporation which mines uranium and has steadily increased its price for yellowcake from $3 a pound to $40?

Japanese suspicions have been further aroused by the strange case of Shoul Eisenberg, a travelling nuclear salesman belonging to the United Development Corporation of Tel Aviv who is actually based in Tokyo and makes frequent trips to South Korea and neighbouring countries. Eisenberg, it has emerged, was paid $18.3m. by Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd for his services in helping to sell two Candu reactors to the Korea Electric Corporation of Seoul, South Korea for $700m. Eisenberg supplied a cryptic account listing $10m. for 'public relations' and $8.3m. for 'expenses'. C. S. Min, president of the Korea Electric Corporation, resigned shortly after the deal was concluded in 1975, complaining none too convincingly that he had been the victim of professional jealousy and unfounded rumour-mongering.

Handsome commissions and lavish public relations work are, of course, another well-established tradition of the flash-bang game. What has aroused a certain uneasiness about this type of transaction is the fact that Candu reactors make plutonium, and it was, in fact, with a Canadian reactor that the Indians made *their* nuclear device, strictly for peaceful purposes only. And the South Korean Defence Minister has said that, if American nuclear weapons are withdrawn from his half of the country, Seoul will have to consider the nuclear option.

The Japanese felt the first wave of the *plutonium shokku* on 14 October last year, a few days before President Ford, reacting to the proliferation issue introduced into the American electoral campaign by his peanut-growing rival, announced a three-year pause in the export or transfer of reprocessing or enrichment technology, or, in less formal language, selling any gear suitable for making atomic bombs on the quiet. The *Levan Fisher* was on her humble but necessary rounds, collecting a load of spent fuel-rods from the Japan Atomic Power Company for shipment to Cumbria, when a man in Washington came on the telephone and told the power company the shipment was suspended, in virtue of the American origin of the original enriched fuel.

No one wants this dangerous stuff lying around Japan, so the company phoned the US Energy Research and Development Administration in Washington and got the prohibition lifted, on the condition that the Japanese power company reports every future shipment to Washington and accounts for every fuel-rod reprocessed.

Much worse was to come. On 1 January this year the Canadians, unable to get a similar blanket commitment from Japan that uranium of Canadian origin would only be enriched, reprocessed or turned into plutonium under Canadian inspection, suspended uranium shipments to Japan. A few days later Vice-President Walter Mondale arrived in Tokyo and tried, unsuccessfully, to get the Japanese Government to suspend work on its enrichment, reprocessing and breeder facilities. As the whole point of Japan's nuclear programme is to break out of the energy bondage imposed by the Arabs, accepting a new set of foremen with their hands on Japan's electricity switch is, to say the least, a somewhat unattractive idea.

Peaceable Intentions

Australia, meanwhile, has plenty of uranium – a quarter of the world's reserves, including the biggest known deposit of all, at Jabiluka in the Northern Territory, just underneath the sacred ritual grounds of the Oenpelli aborigines. Japan was negotiating for some of this uranium for its expanded beat-the-Arabs programme when the Whitlam Labour government suspended all uranium exports, partly out of concern for aboriginal welfare, partly because they were thinking of building an enrichment plant themselves and extracting the top dollar, thank you, from their Japanese uranium customers.

The Fraser Government, answering an urgent appeal from the Chubu Power Company of Nagoya, sent 200 tons of yellowcake from its own stockpile in May this year. This has sparked a controversy in Australia. Scenting a new Vietnam issue, the Labour conference last month announced an indefinite moratorium on uranium exports from Australia to anyone, and said that it will cancel any contracts entered into before it gets back into office, which may be a long way away but still makes Australia a doubtful supplier for the future. Japan has thus had its uranium supplies cut off before its nuclear programme was fairly begun. The Japanese case is that their intentions are peaceable, hardly anyone in Japan wants to make nuclear weapons, that their constitution forbids Japan making war (or having an army) and that Japan cannot submit its energy supplies to double or triple vetoes from countries which are themselves in the flash-bang game, as Japan knows to her cost, and are not prepared to accept any such restrictions themselves.

Japan's critics reply that South Korea actually has better claims to be carrying out the strict principles of non-proliferation. Korea signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty years ago, Japan only last year under the eccentric Miki regime, after years of humming and ha'ing. South Korea has no known enriching or reprocessing facilities, while Japan, on a laboratory scale (like India's) has both. South Korea has never tried to make an atomic bomb, while Japan has (although, admittedly, some of the people in the Government then were different).

And, a further unspoken uneasiness what are any safeguards worth, when ther are wads of $10m. flying about for 'public relations'? Lofty principles, sordid materia interests – who can sort them out? Bu then, that's the flash-bang game.

Tokyo

Roger Woddis

Playing with Fire

We are not ready yet.
We were too busy
To notice the time.
There were glasses to empty,
Stomachs to fill,
And less than the sheet of flame
Was the unpaid bill.

We want to forget:
It was nothing to do with us,
They're not fools, we said
And someone in a white coat
With spittle on his lower lip
Nodded gravely and agreed.
We are not ready yet
For acts of statesmanship;
We are amateurs,
Passengers in a bus
Driven by a muffled figure
Whose shoulders shake
As at some secret joke,
Going through the lights
And heading across rutted fields
To the cliff's edge.

We cannot stop now;
We have come too far
To wonder whether we are safe
Or sane enough to journey further,
Though the past warns us
Not to open the present,
And after the fire
A still small voice
Tells us we are not ready.

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Alexander Cockburn

Running for Mayor

There was a time 50 years ago when it was fun to be mayor of New York. Even in the Sixties, though he helped bankrupt the place in the course of giving good intentions a bad name, Mayor John Lindsay, probably bounded out of bed, eager to grab the problems of the day by the throat, or at least sit down at breakfast and pay them off. It's surprising, over halfway through the Seventies in this city, that the present incumbent, Mayor Abe Beame, even dares to stick his head out from under the blankets at all. And there are those who convincingly argue that for much of the last four years, he might just as well have remained in a state of deep sleep. But the fact is that, along with half-a-dozen opponents, Beame is up at dawn each day and indeed will be at least until September, shaking hands, making statements, looking busy and hoping against hope that once again, come next November, the voters will put him back in the city hall.

The job is, as they say, challenging. New York has just passed through the worst four years in its history. It is still deeply in debt, and likely to remain that way for a long time to come. It has high unemployment – over 50 per cent for adults in black and hispanic areas of the city, with (according to a recent government survey) 85 per cent for black and hispanic teenagers and 70 per cent for white ones. It has 1,200,000 people on welfare. It has racism, expressed in constant lowering of expectations and declining services for blacks and hispanics. It has a shrinking tax base, with businesses both large and small leaving the city along with those members of the white middle and lower middle classes who can afford to get out. With a disintegrating economic infrastructure, it is the prime symbol of the declining old cities of the North East. To the rest of the country – whose elected representatives in Congress decide whether to bail it out – the city is the home of kikes, niggers and fags, all maintained in alleged luxury by the Federal Treasury: Sodom and Gomorrah on welfare.

Basically, the main duty of the mayor of New York is to keep all ten fingers stuck in the dyke and holler loudly to Washington for help. Though they don't put matters in quite these terms, there are, as I said at the start, half-a-dozen candidates out on the streets claiming they have more fingers and louder voices than anyone else.

The schedule is a little complicated. On 8 September the primary race for all the Democratic contenders takes place. If any one of these gets over 40 per cent of the vote, he or she automatically becomes the Democratic candidate in November, facing a Republican. If – as is highly likely – no one wins a 40 per cent slice on 8 September, there will be a run-off 11 days later between the top two vote-getters in the first primary. The winner of this encounter will then face the Republican in November.

Probably the only true disaster for the city would be the re-election of Mayor Beame, candidate of some of the big labour unions and real estate interests. He carries the misfortune of having campaigned four years ago under the slogan 'He's the man who knows the buck' – a reference to his presumed skills as the city's chief accounting officer for a period of time. In the great fiscal crisis, when it became apparent that absolutely no one in city hall knew either where the buck had gone or where more might come from, Beame sank before the challenge. All power was removed from him forthwith and placed in the hands of the Governor of the state, Hugh Carey, and assorted bankers and businessmen.

Poor Beame's great hope has been that his early endorsement of Jimmy Carter last year would produce largesse from Washington and hence the gratitude of the citizenry. Carter, he claimed, had personally promised him to federalise welfare, an act which would save the city about $700m. a year. He placed too much hope in the crafty Georgian, who was reasserting his southern roots and commending a balanced Budget in Yazoo City, Mississippi the day after the looters in the blackout were demonstrating New York's problems in a graphic sort of way.

Meanwhile, this veteran of the clubhouse system bustles about in that painful pre-election ritual known as being 'energetic and decisive'. I saw him down in Washington the other day, presumably on his begging rounds. He was trying to get into a lift. The doors opened and there was tiny Abe peering in. From behind me a New York voice rose in shock and amazement: 'My God, it's a nightmare.' Beame stiffened, the doors shut and he vanished from sight.

The best known opponent of Beame is Bella Abzug. Ten days ago the *New York Times*, in an important editorial which we'll come to in a minute, reproached her for 'an intensity of political style that offends as much as it appeals'. There's truth in this, whether you find the intensity offensive or not. A lot of people like Bella and a lot of people hate her. An old-left civil rights and labour lawyer, she became a member of Congress in 1970. She was an early opponent of the Vietnam war, an early advocate of impeachment of Nixon. She was a vigorous critic of the CIA and fought effectively for privacy legislation. She is noisy, frequently brutal to her staff and often distinctly unloveable. She is quintessentially left-liberal Jewish Manhattan, and of course a woman, the only one in the race. Last year she ran for what many feel would have been her ideal job, one of the two New York Senators. She lost by the tiniest of margins to Daniel Patrick Moynihan. More than any of the other candidates, Bella has glamour and the enthusiastic support of artistic, chic and radical New York as well as less conspicuous and much poorer members of the electorate.

Beame's main opponent four years ago was Herman Badillo, a person whose base rests on the Puerto Rican community and whose problem – despite generally acknowledged competence and intelligence – has been to transcend this base. Like Percy Sutton, the only black candidate, he is plainly failing to do this and has no money and no hope of victory. The other well known liberal – afflicted with the same problems – is Ed Koch, Congressman for the East Side of Manhattan.

There is one more significant Democratic candidate. He is the only Italian in the race and the only Catholic. He has the support of the Governor, of the three major newspapers in the city, and of the blue-collar white ethnics in the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens. Mario Cuomo should not, however, be regarded as identical with such thuggish Italian aspirants to office in recent electoral bouts at Mario Biaggi or even Mario Procoaccino of immortal memory. Unlike these gentlemen, he has actually written a book (a diary of his mediating efforts in a famous housing dispute between whites and blacks a few years ago in Forest Hills). He has taught law, used to be a professional athlete, is witty and articulate and hence a favourite of columnists and editorial writers. As a colleague of mine recently remarked, he is the first Italian intellectual in New York politics.

This, needless to say, is not in itself a guarantee of electoral triumph. It is hard to know, in fact, what Cuomo stands for, because he has little public track record, was quite reluctant to run, and has not said much since he started running. But liberals can live with him because he is demonstrably not a stupid bigot and has come out against capital punishment, against denial of medicaid abortion funds to poor people and – guardedly – in favour of homosexual rights. White ethnics in Queens and Brooklyn can, and do, support him because they are mostly unaware of the above and regard him as a tough Italian who can keep down the blacks. The power groups in the city can, and do, support him because he is a conservative sort of liberal and not likely to do anything particularly alarming, a splendidly reassuring sort of man to go through the country with the city's begging bowl. 'Bella would cost us two points in interest charges,' one businessman remarked to me recently.

You can, in fact, tailor Cuomo in all manner of ways to meet specific expectations. He himself says nothing very much (though some of his stands have been reasonably brave given his white ethnic support). He is probably helped as much as anything else by the current enthusiasm – symbolised in the film *Rocky* – for ethnic identity.

Race was not a big issue in the election until the blackout and consequent looting. The cause of the worst riots since 1852 may have been (apart from the sudden darkness) the debauching of liberal Sixties' programmes by thieves and placemen, the jobless misery of the city's underclass; but the result was termination of the hopes of the Puerto Rican, Badillo as well as those of the black candidate, Sutton. The accent of the campaign shifted to the Right, to calls (made by the mayor) for the reinstitution of capital punishment and by others for a war on crime and for certainty and

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swiftness of punishment: all this in a city whose justice system is in a state of collapse.

Ten days ago the *New York Times*, in an important and surprisingly early move, endorsed Cuomo. The editorial stated that he was the man to end 'tribalism' and to bind the city's wounds. The endorsement, which has great political weight, drew howls of protest not only from other candidates but also from Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post* which – though it has been an early and determined promoter of Cuomo – said it was premature and undemocratic to call the shots five weeks before the primary.

It seems, at the moment, likely that Cuomo will make it into the run-off, possibly with Abzug – though Beame is still in the equation. As usual it is a question of who will bother to vote. Abzug could win important black and hispanic support if either of these two blocs feel like visiting the polls. Cuomo's supporters are looking more and more confident. In November, whether it is Cuomo or Abzug, or even Beame, the Democratic candidate will probably face and almost certainly beat Roy Goodman, a Rockefeller Republican who is heir to the Ex-Lax fortune.

I asked Bella Abzug – who I must say I would like to win – the other day what, given the federal treasurers, the debt and the bankers, any mayor of New York could actually do. Her answer was 'not much' but that a strong mayor could give the city a sense of hope. This is truer than such rhetoric normally is. The next mayor will have to stem white flight, revive black hopes, produce a realistic economic development plan for the city, attract business, mount a political campaign by all the big cities against Carter's Washington, give good intentions a good name and above all look dignified and determined – a tricky task when your fingers are in the dyke and you are hollering for help.

New York

David Mason

Death Row – Rhodesian Style

On 24 September 1976, in a speech hailed as a victory for Western diplomacy and the forces of reason, Ian Smith declared that he had accepted the principle of majority rule within two years for the people of Rhodesia. Yet the background against which this speech was made, and against which Anglo-American diplomatic initiatives have taken place ever since, is one of the most systematic and ruthless destruction of his black political opponents.

Since 21 April 1975, at least 96 people are known to have been sentenced to death under the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act or on other charges which clearly indicated their involvement with the armed liberation struggle. A further eight were sentenced to death in the weeks immediately preceding 21 April 1975 but no report of their execution had appeared at that date. Of this total of 104 people, only six are known to have been successful on appeal in having their sentences commuted to life imprisonment or less. It can only be assumed that the vast majority of the remaining 98 have already been executed.

These figures need to be contrasted with the total of 60 known executions during the whole decade from UDI up to April 1975. Moreover, it needs to be borne in mind that, although the Smith regime sentenced large numbers of captured freedom fighters to death in the years immediately following UDI, it did not actually carry out any executions until 1968. So there is a dramatic and striking contrast between 60 executions in ten years and only just short of 100 in the next two years. The figures speak for themselves.

The provisions of the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act, taken together with prevailing white attitudes towards 'terrorism', mean that defendants run a serious risk of being convicted and possibly sentenced to death for relatively insignificant offences. Under this Act, the burden is placed upon the accused to prove his or her innocence 'beyond reasonable doubt'; until that time he or she is assumed to be guilty. This may well make a court conviction a *fait accompli* in the case of an uneducated defendant without adequate counsel or defence witnesses. The 'hanging clauses' themselves provide for the death penalty to be used against defendants who have not personally used force or caused damage or injury directly but who are considered guilty by association. This is particularly true of Sections 24 and 51. Since April 1975 a total of 15 people have been sentenced to death on conviction of recruiting, or *encouraging to go* for guerrilla training.

The courts empowered to impose the death penalty are the high courts in Salisbury and Bulawayo, and the new special courts. Trials in the high court are held before a judge and assessors, all of whom are invariably white. There is no jury. Under Section 360 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, criminal court proceedings may be held partially or entirely in camera at the request of the prosecution or state witnesses, with members of the public and press excluded. Names, locations and other details of a case may be selectively withheld from publication on the grounds of national security. Such information as appears in the Rhodesian press serves a useful purpose, from the regime's point of view, in reassuring the white public that 'terrorists' are being captured and brought to justice according to the normal rules and procedures.

Since their introduction at the end of April 1976 the special courts are known to have sentenced at least 68 people to death. Of these, 62 subsequently had appeals dismissed, in two cases appeals were pending in July 1977, while four people had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment or less. Special court sittings have been reported in the Rhodesian press at Beitbridge, Bindura, Bulawayo, Chipinga, Chiredzi, Essexcale, Fort Victoria, Gwelo, Inyanga, Karoi, Mtoko, Salisbury, Umtali and Wankie. Given the speed with which the special courts are able to operate and communication difficulties, many trials are likely to take place to all intents and purposes in camera.

The rules of procedure governing the special courts continue to be a cause for serious concern. They were introduced by the regime specifically to try captured guerrillas and those accused of assisting them. A session may be arranged at short notice in any place of the court president's own choosing – by arranging for trials to take place 'on the spot' in the operational areas, the regime aimed to get rid of a backlog of Law and Order (Maintenance) Act cases in the regular courts while at the same time using the trials as a warning to local people of the penalties for supporting the armed struggle.

The accused's chances of securing adequate legal defence in a special court have been virtually extinguished. The defendant's right to be represented by an advocate or attorney of his or her own choice, for example, can be overruled by the court president if in his opinion getting a defence counsel to the court would result in 'undue delay'. This clause was invoked in the case of eight young supporters of Bishop Muzorewa, sentenced to death in August 1976 on conviction of bomb attacks in the Salisbury area. The defendant in a special court is obliged to give his or her own evidence first and if he fails to mention any relevant fact, the court can use this as incriminating evidence.

Executions are normally carried out by hanging in Salisbury Central Prison. It would seem that condemned men are given little advance warning, although executions are believed to take place as a general rule on Monday mornings. (Robert Bhebe, however, was hanged on a Wednesday). In June 1975, Edson Sithole, publicity secretary of the ANC, claimed that executions were being carried out at night and cited the case of two men who had been hanged at 7 o'clock in the evening.

The families and relatives of condemned men are not advised beforehand of the place or date of execution. According to a spokesman for the Ministry of Justice in a reply to the *Rhodesia Herald* in January 1977, such information is not withheld after the execution 'unless there is an order covering such disclosures. To date there has not been such an order.' The spokesman refused to say whether or not the information was volunteered. It would appear that it is in fact left up to the families themselves to approach the Ministry or prison authorities for confirmation of a hanging. Many are likely to be unaware that their relatives have been executed as a result. In October 1976 Mr P. K. Van der Byl, at that time Minister of Defence, told a reporter at the Geneva conference who asked why the authorities did not release the names of people who had been hanged that 'he did not know if this was the case and added 'anyway, it is academic because they are normally dead after it'.

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Patrick Wintour

The Walden Legacy

Cast your eye across Ladywood's rainy landscape, past the pedestrian underpass smeared with *graffiti*, across the patches of wasteland and nearby a derelict foundry stands a towerblock at a supposedly aesthetic angle to the slabs of low-rise houses at its base. Up on its 18th-floor windows you can see a poster which nobody could possibly read from the ground. You can only deduce from its purple colours that it reads 'Vote Davies, Conservative'. Thus a by-election comes to the purpose-built slums of Ladywood, courtesy of the departure of Brian Walden. For the moment the leaders of the Asian community who met Merlyn Rees last Friday are still impressing on Labour the simple priority of explaining on Birmingham Radio's Asian programme why there is to be another election on 18 August. The Asians, who normally take elections very seriously and vote Labour in huge numbers, assumed that May's council elections would be the last for the year.

It is not just the physical backdrop which gives this election such a seedy quality. In one of the smallest constituencies in the country, with consistently the lowest turnout in Birmingham, no less than ten candidates are out looking for votes, promising inner city aid and protection by or from the police. To the front of the pack is a Tory described as 'ideal for Ladywood'. John-Quentin Davies was educated at Leighton Park, Cambridge and Harvard; he worked for the diplomatic service in Moscow before becoming an assistant director of the merchant bankers Morgan Grenfell.

If he were to win, Davies would almost certainly have to thank the National Front. With the highest concentration of immigrants in Britain, Ladywood is looked on as one of their growth points – so much so that Walden's last service to his local party was to press Callaghan to have a snap election at the risk of forfeiting an economic upturn in November. Otherwise the Front would have had five months to make the electoral atmosphere even nastier. As it is, its candidate, a solicitor and a former Young Conservative, Anthony Reed-Herbert, represents the new wave of dispassionate racist. 'Racialism is a natural and desirable defence mechanism inside all of us.' It is as simple and respectable as that. He has addressed a letter to the 14,000 immigrant voters politely explaining why they should be forcibly repatriated. But for all the politeness, the Front's HQ was ransacked on Sunday night, their meeting disrupted on Monday night and their leafleters chased off the streets of Winson Green by Rastafarians. Nevertheless, they intend to beat the Liberals for third place; the Liberals are torn by internal dissension and resignations following the rejection of a coloured local community worker, Mr Ratnaraja, in favour of their former candidate, Kenneth Hardeman, a Birmingham restaurateur and local Liberal alderman.

There was a long sigh of relief in the Labour camp when the Liberals made their choice because Labour is banking on the Asian vote to survive. Walden developed a network of contacts amongst the Sikhs from the Punjab who dominate the Soho and Rotton Park wards. Their highly structured community based around the Smethwick Temple to the west, the Graham Street Temple in the east and Union Roads in the north makes it easier to get to know their leaders than the West Indians'. There was a mutual relationship between Walden and the Asian leaders: each brought prestige to the other. Employers liked the Asians, they worked and did not complain and Walden found them jobs. Nevertheless no Asian has been allowed to stand for Labour and there are no coloured JPs in the city. As one leader, Darshan Singh Bhogal, asked: 'Where are the examples? When will it come? Will our children be another generation of factory and foundry workers and will they say that my generation was so stupid that none of them deserved responsible positions?' Nor are they happy with the recent changes in the child benefit allowance which discriminate against families with children abroad. Rees was there to reassure them.

But Labour's fate ultimately may rest on Walden's legacy. Brian Walden prides himself on his unpartisan approach to politics, but it did not always cut too much ice with his constituency party. Six months ago the treasurer and secretary were voted off the GMC by a growing left-wing group in the Soho ward. The executive committee declared the election null and void because of irregularities. The same result came up after the vote was taken again weeks later. Then when Walden resigned, 'disillusioned with party politics', the candidate selection procedure was rushed through and the Soho ward, the only ward to go through the full nominating procedure, were snubbed by having their candidate omitted from the shortlist of four. Despite protestations to the NEC the constituency executive committee stuck to their list and John Sever, the local candidate, who was already prospective candidate for another constituency, was selected. Sever is a very nice man but that hardly alters the fact that the Left had been defeated on every major count – mainly by a man later appointed agent, Peter Marriner.

It was against this fractious background that Socialist Unity accused Marriner of being a member of the British Movement, and threatened to march on Labour's HQ (an old bookies shop) if he did not resign. Marriner insists he was doing research work for his thesis at the Poly by infiltrating the British Movement and claims that he is the victim of spiteful Leftists inside the Labour Party. Walden supports him: 'Apart from myself, no one got on better with the Asian community than him. It is not the greatest coincidence that Socialist Unity came upon this story at this time.' The *Birmingham Post* and *Mail* inevitably took the opportunity to discredit the Labour campaign.

They devoted 105 lines to the story of Marriner's attendance at a British Movement's St George's Day Rally. It is still not yet clear which way Marriner was infiltrating. *Searchlight* has been researching for some time his long connections with the Right and others advised him to stand down weeks before he was forced to. Marriner has provided no convincing explanation of why he was on the British Movement's platform, or why he is described in the BM's paper, the *Patriot* as leader of their youth wing, nor why he sent a letter to Rhodesia requesting funds for BM. Nor, still stranger, why as a self-proclaimed social democrat he was involved in Workers' Fight in 1975. At worst Marriner is an out-and-out fascist, at best he is some kind of political groupie.

But the fact that he controlled the Ladywood Labour Party shows the calibre of that party and the decline into which Walden let it fall. Altogether there are 150 party members in the constituency, of which not even a third are active. As Marriner himself admitted, the social-democratic wing is literally dying off in Ladywood. It was a habit of Walden's as an intellectual of the parliamentary centre to bewail extremism in the party: indeed, he recently wrote to the *Birmingham Mail*: 'When I see Red fascists purporting to represent the Labour Party I wonder whether I'm going mad or the world is.' The irony is that his own bit of the party was so bereft of political ideas that it largely survived on the back of a Brian Walden fan club made up of elderly ladies, marshalled by Peter Marriner. It will do well to survive the election.

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Jonathan Dimbleby

Sadat's Solitary Hand

There is a famous café in the centre of Cairo where intellectuals gather to drink coffee and denounce Sadat. Some of them have been in prison under Nasser but now think of those days with nostalgia: at least then Egypt was held in respect across the world. Now look at us. Mocked in private, patronised in public. And who has done it? Sadat. And so, out of deep contempt, they devise the downfall of their President: his own men in the cabinet will turn on him. Or the Right in the army. Or the Left. Or even – delicious justice – the United States of America to whose overtures he yielded his country with all the discretion of a common whore.

You do not phrase your conversation with a President in quite such language but in any case he has heard those murmurings before and is unmoved. From his summer retreat in Alexandria, where once he sat down by the Mediterranean to make friends with Henry Kissinger, he ponders a greater horizon beyond which he perceives a new era of national prosperity and personal prestige built on the foundations of a lasting peace in the Middle East. Then his critics will be routed. To suggest that the horizon is rapidly retreating before his advancing imagination while war creeps up on him from behind is to talk like a subversive, or a Marxist, or communist, or Nasserite, or – which to him amounts to the same thing, and is equally dangerous – an agent of Ghadaffi.

For three hours I sat opposite President Sadat while he puffed at a reassuring pipe, perspired profusely – 'no it's not the TV lights, I always sweat a great deal' – and took me on a tour of his horizon, sermonising on the way of the 'sacred mission' which is his. Presidential fantasies are not unique to Egypt but Sadat does seem to stride among the clouds of his imagination at a disconcertingly steady pace. He is also inordinately fond of the word 'my': 'my plan for the year 2000', 'my cities in the desert', 'my oil – a million barrels a day by 1980', 'my industrial plants and agricultural projects'. An idiosyncrasy of presidential syntax? Perhaps. But: 'my democracy', 'my constitution', 'my political parties' and 'my free press'? You sense that these at least *are* his, offered at his discretion; that what is given can be taken away.

There *is* more freedom. A dissident may speak his mind openly (at least in private) without fear that his sleep will be disturbed by a knock from 'the visitors of the dawn' – the phrase coined by Muhammed Heikel, when he was editor of *Al Ahram*, to describe and condemn his friend Nasser's secret police. But freedom is not absolute. Heikel inconveniently takes the view that Sadat builds his dreams on quicksand: that there will be no peace in the Middle East, and that the 'Open Door' policy is doomed. 'My free press' may, of course, print what they like – and exclude what they don't. It so happens that the editors of 'my free press' are appointed by the President, and that – to a man, if not to a fault – they find themselves in enthusiastic support of his policies. Thus Heikel's voice, once the most influential in the Middle East, is unheard in his own land. Not that his name is forgotten. He is regularly and roundly denounced. *Al Ahram* discovers that he is an agent of the CIA; *Al Akbar* exposes his links with the KGB (or vice versa – it matters little) and then one or other of them wonders why the Attorney-General is not taking steps to apprehend him. The victim of this presidential displeasure (for only Sadat could sanction such an attack against such a man) is worldly-wise and resilient. He sits in his elegant flat, watching over the Nile, awaiting his 'visitors of the dawn'.

It is true, as is widely proclaimed, that the censors have left. No army officers now sit at the editorial desk dumbly red-pencilling forbidden names and words. But in the old days journalists discovered ways with words, and readers saw between the lines. And within a framework of albeit dreary general principles – socialism, nationalism, non-alignment, pan-Arabism – there was serious and sophisticated debate. Now public debate in the press is dead. 'My editors' permit no errant way with words. There is nothing to read between the lines. And presidential rhetoric is 'freely' echoed to the last full stop.

I witnessed the process at first hand when Sadat used his interview with me to repudiate Nasser explicitly for the first time. Sadat is nothing if not bold. He recognises that Nasserist sentiment is a persistent and real threat to the future of his Egypt. Nasser has loomed over him for seven years. Even 'the victory' of 1973 did no more than somewhat redress the balance of public respect in his favour. Sadat did not need the outburst of Nasserism in the January riots to know that the dead man is not yet buried. It is for this reason that Heikel is silenced. And for this reason, given the choice of pretending still to be the great man's disciple or of denying him utterly, that Sadat has now – with some courage – decided to sever his ties with the father of modern Egypt. So he told me that 'my friend Nasser' was responsible, with his socialism, for policies which have 'made our country reach a very miserable state'. His officials had asked if they could record the interview. I agreed. A few days later, the Egyptian press dutifully splashed the news across the front pages, that Sadat had broken with Nasser. Yet what should have been a bombshell provoked no serious comment, let alone argument in the press. Sadat had said it. Therefore it was.

'Like 'my free press', 'my democracy' is a distinctly idiosyncratic concept – though it has already found favour with those who used to trumpet that the rancid politics of the Lebanon constituted a jewel of democracy in Araby. For them, it is the form and not the content which matters. And it is for them, as well as for his own people, that Sadat created 'my constitution'.

Egypt now has three political parties, which separately embrace the same spectrum of opinion that had inhabited the old Arab Socialist Union. The three parties – the Rightists, the Centre, and the Leftists (and as their creator says: 'What else save those three is there in the field of politics?') – are still housed in the Union. Ostensibly it is from there, under the guidance of the President, that they battle for popular support. They are free to organise and campaign – though they are forbidden under the constitution to criticise the President. Moreover, only the Centre Party, which is entirely the President's creature, and which holds some 90 per cent of the seats in the Assembly, has access to radio, television or the press.

This does not appear unduly to disturb the Rightist Party except for the sake of democratic principle. Its leader is Moustafa Mourad, who is President of Cairo's Chamber of Commerce and a great admirer of President Sadat. Mourad is one of those who endured 18 years of what is now perceived as the rampant socialism of President Nasser, without apparently suffering any material discomfort in the process. He is, in short, a rich man – like his President. And, as he is quick to tell you, he is still – like his President – a socialist, which today in Egypt means that both of them believe profoundly in the virtues of free enterprise.

He took me on a tour of his constituency, through a satanic underworld of crumbling factories, to illustrate democracy in practice. He was at once surrounded by petitioners; workers pouring with sweat, faces, hair and clothes covered with the filth of a tanning plant. Gusts of black carbon smoke swirled over them, obliterating them from sight. Their voices rose out of darkness seeking redress for all manner of minor ills

Mr Mourad tells them that he will do what he can, and then treats me to a homily on the virtues of the market economy. You see, capital is international. There is no longer any room for the small business. We need the multinationals. And we must have low taxation and high profits. And, of course, he will do what he can for his constituency.

The only coherent opposition to Sadat permitted public expression is the Leftist party, though it never mentions the President by name. It is neither necessary, they say, nor, they add, very wise. Their leader Khalid Mohaddin, holds a Lenin Peac

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Prize, and is unashamedly a Marxist even though that makes him, by definition, something of a traitor. Whenever the Government wishes to have the press denounce the devil and all his works, you may be assured that the name of Khalid Mohaddin will loom large in the obedient article. Since he has no right of reply, and no access at all to the media, politics for Mohaddin becomes the art of the impossible. At rallies, which only the faithful know about or attend, he explains that he is slandered because the truths he utters are feared. His followers assent, and chant in unified and uplifting passion: 'The rich are living on the backs of the poor, the Ministers live in palaces while the workers live in slums.' No official stops them because they are impotent: communication is not in their hands. No word of their rally appears in the press.

That they articulate a groundswell of feeling in Egypt is hardly beyond doubt. Indeed their critique of Sadat's policy is so simple but yet so penetrating, that the President has recently taken to perceiving amongst their number the agents not merely of Ghadaffi but of the Great Bear itself, the Soviet Union. The Leftists argue that it is absurd to suppose that in a poor country like Egypt, the economy can grow properly without central direction; that to leave the country at the mercy of market forces produces distortions and injustices, which cause deepening frustration and resentment. They welcome their President's apparent belief in democracy but are convinced – and if their own case is evidence, with some justice – that popular frustration will soon be muzzled by state repression. They fear that Sadat's nascent democracy cannot survive his creeping capitalism.

Confronted with such subversion, President Sadat exudes a positively Wilsonian calm, sucking thoughtfully at the pipe, and explaining that this was the problem with the 'old' socialism. It stirs up hatred 'among my people'. For that reason 'my democracy' must fight 'very vehemently' to unite the nation. The food riots of January were a case in point. They were *not* caused, (as you might have otherwise imagined) by a populace in revolt against price rises of up to 40 per cent in basic commodities – when malnutrition in Egypt kills scores of thousands of infants every year, when most of the mass live on the edge of hunger all the time. No – the riots were instigated (the President still insists) by Ghadaffi's men in league with the Nasserites. But 'my people' were not led astray. No, the rioters were 'riff-raff'. But, Mr President, hundreds of thousands took to the streets. Over one hundred were shot dead by the troops. Many thousands were arrested. Perhaps two thousand are still in jail awaiting trial. And they were all riff-raff, Mr President?

'Riff-raff.'

'Not the people?'

Puff, puff, judicious on the pipe: 'Riff-raff, Rif-raff.'

'You're certain?'

'Riff-raff.'

Since there can be no point in persisting with a myth that not even the Americans believe, one is led to the conclusion that Sadat has come to believe his own propaganda. Likewise, he surely believes that Egypt really is in the process of creating a true social democracy, to be borrowed from Britain and grafted on to Egypt.

Some facts are relevant here. Egypt: population 40 million, illiteracy 70 per cent, unemployment (officially nil) around 20 per cent, average wage £5.00 a week. In Cairo ten million people live in a city whose facilities were designed to meet the needs of less than half that number. Six million people live in slums, with five, six even ten to a room, and no sanitation. Electricity is intermittent; and sewage flows in the streets. Each day the population of the city is swelled by at least 500 immigrants from rural Egypt. There the peasants (some 60 per cent of the population) live in mud huts, bare except for pots, pans, infants and animals, and enough food for the evening meal. The lives of Egypt's poor remain untouched by 'my political parties' and 'my free press'. And the international capital which enters Sadat's 'Open Door' does not reach their hearth.

Of course Egypt needs foreign capital, and not simply enough to pay off the interest on the foreign debt which exceeds $15,000m., nor just to buy the grain from abroad without which the poor would succumb to mass starvation. Egypt needs more investment in basic industry and agriculture – precisely that kind of foreign money which most shies away from the political uncertainties which hover menacingly over the country. So far the 'Open Door', which is to save Egypt from disaster, has transformed the 'free zone' of Port Said into a Singapore for shoddy goods, and filled Cairo with foreign architects, planners, consultants and advisers, who are busy building dreams with pencils and paper. They are rivalled in number only by the export bankers of Europe and America. But so far foreign investors prefer to build hotels in which to wait and see.

Meanwhile a dubious bunch of international commercial travellers with an eye for a fast buck have found the new Egypt much to their taste. They have found common cause with the members of a tiny elite, who are busy bringing out the black-market money they made under Nasser but had to store under beds or in foreign banks. They are not the entrepreneurs that capitalism requires, but parasites feeding upon each other – rentiers, merchants, importers, exporters, tourist agents, busily making money, producing nothing. They bedeck themselves in fine French clothes from blossoming new boutiques, and buy Mercedes (at £25,000 a piece) or even Rolls-Royces (at £75,000). Sadat has freed them from any bondage to the national interest – or rather, has redefined it to suit their taste. And when he speaks of 'my people' they sit up and smile, certain that is it to them that he speaks.

This new elite is eyed askance by those who flourished in Farouk's Egypt and who hope that history is running in their direction once more. The vulgarity of the *nouveaux riches* offends those who know how to live in opulence modestly. But as the scion of one old family said of them, as we sat in the shade at the Gezira Club (from which the British once ruled the colony): 'They will learn, I expect, one

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day.' In short, there has been a great moral victory in Egypt. For reaction.

It pervades the upper echelons. Nasser, as his friends are the first to observe, never tackled the issue of class in Egypt. The social hierarchies remained virtually intact, despite land reform and public ownership and a fervent nationalism which the West chose to mistake for revolution. Yet everyone was supposed to assume that in principle at least all men are equal. No more.

Prejudice, however foolish, is once more legitimate. So I was informed by a minor government official of good birth that my 'obsession with the poor and the peasantry' was *quite* inexplicable. Did I not realise that they are stupid and backward, and that persistent close contact with them is not only potentially injurious to health but also demeaning? The same official found it quite in order to bellow at a group of villagers, who a few days earlier had insisted that I take bread with them before seeing round the village, as if they were savages, belonging to another species.

Only a handful of the bourgeoisie seem aware of what history must be heaping up for them. At a party, I speculated that the poor might one day rise up against those who were now making Egypt their own. 'Not so,' I was told, 'the Egyptians are infinitely patient, and soon, in any case, prosperity will be shared more fairly.' Then, cutting through this complacency, one woman interrupted: 'That is nonsense, and we all know it. But what are we supposed to do? I belong to my class. I have to feed and educate my daughter. But, of course, it can't last. It will destroy us. Me. Or if not me, my daughter. Our children.' She silenced the group, until the subject was changed to coffee – Nescafé to be precise, which some believe is very chic, and therefore preferable to the real thing which costs a fraction of the price.

Premonitions of disaster do not find favour with President Sadat, who has determined otherwise. For him the precarious state of his country, poised on the edge of collapse, kept alive by drip feeds from Saudi Arabia and the United States, is not a terminal condition, but a brief interlude between what was and what will be. If . . . There is, even for President Sadat, a great conditional upon which his dreams rely: *if* there is peace in the Middle East.

Sadat seeks peace with the quiet desperation of a man who wishes one day to bid farewell to power with dignity, his 'sacred mission' honourably performed. And Egypt does need peace. Not just because war consumes more than half the country's GNP each year, though that matters. Not just because the foreign investors, in whose good will Sadat has placed so much blind faith, will not put their trust – which means their money – in Egypt until the war clouds are dispersed, though that matters to the President greatly. Not just because a chronically impoverished Third World state is forced to act like a major power, always making ready to wage the most sophisticated war that foreign powers can devise, though that should matter. But just as important is the crippling distortion of perspective imposed by 30 years of conflict. Egypt simply does not have the resources to do more than contemplate the way out of the vicious and soul-destroying mass poverty that is her national lot, until the best men can turn their minds away from war.

So urgent is the presidential search for peace that he cannot countenance the alternative, waving away all doubters with the admonition: 'We are in the peace process, why should we talk of war?' Sadat's urge to graft the West on to the Middle East is overwhelming. When he virtually pleads in public with the Americans give me peace in the Middle East and I will give you free enterprise and social democracy in Egypt, he means it.

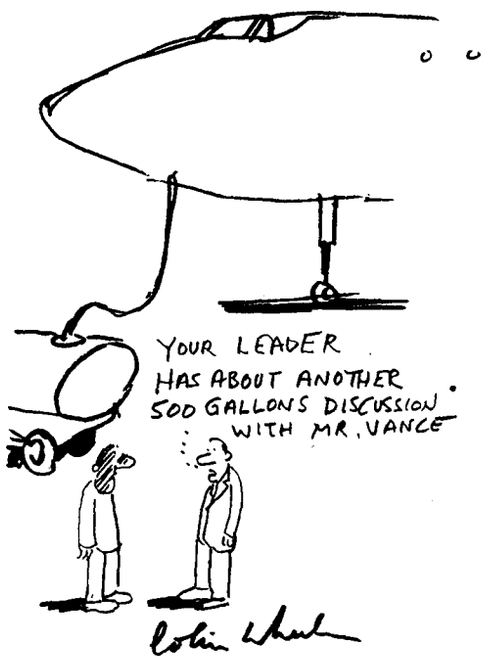
Sadat has staked so much on peace that he affects not to notice the tissue of contradictions which now issue from the White House. He affects not to notice either that Israel is refusing to relinquish the West Bank, to contemplate a Palestinian state, to surrender East Jerusalem, to sit at the same table as an independent PLO. In effect, the President of Egypt affects not to notice that the prospect of peace is diminishing by the hour, and with it all his dreams for the rebirth of his nation.

Not that he lacks an alternative – whether he yet perceives it or not. In harsh reality, war would better serve Sadat's survival than peace. Upon war he could blame the collapse of an Open Door policy doomed for quite other reasons. War would once more rally the nation around the man who led them to 'victory' in 1973. Once more President Sadat would be called upon to lead his people into the tragic glory of another bout of carnage in the Middle East. If not this year, or next year, then the year after. And then, even if 'my plans for the year 2000' fall apart, at least 'my people' – even the dissidents drinking coffee in Cairo – will be behind their President.

John Beddoe

Thumbs Down for Dockland

Since he took over the Department of the Environment, Mr Peter Shore has made several speeches drawing attention to the needs of inner-city areas. Aid from the national purse must go to them, he urged, rather than to the new towns which have been so generously financed over the past 25 years. The idea wasn't new – ministers seldom have new ideas – but he sounded as though he meant it. And last month, when he was invited to pledge support for the new underground line planned by London Transport (originally called the River Line, and then hopefully renamed the Jubilee Line), a positive response was confidently awaited. London's dockland, the scarred and decaying territory which the line is intended to revive, is the biggest such problem area in the country, measuring seven miles by five. By the same token, it presents the greatest opportunity for urban rescue likely to occur in our lifetime. Besides, Mr Peter Shore is after all the MP for Stepney and Poplar. His answer, however, was a blank refusal. Since the cost of the project is set at £200m. – not an immense sum by Concorde standards, but beyond the Greater London Council's unaided resources – the verdict implies the sentence.



Disastrous for Londoners, the decision has grave implications for city-dwellers throughout Britain. Today, as in the 1930s, we face an interlocking crisis of unemployment, economic stagnation or decline, and social decay. But there is a difference: the hardest-hit communities before the war were compact towns or even industrial villages. The 'town that was murdered' was Jarrow, not Newcastle-on-Tyne. In the 1970s, the distressed areas are close to the heart of major cities – London, Liverpool, Glasgow. The sickness stems from the collapse or departure of hundreds of disparate sources of employment, and in particular from the contraction of dock work. Along the Thames, the move to Tilbury has brought the closure of most of the old docks, and the container revolution has done the rest of the damage. Thus, in the principal working-class areas of such cities, the unemployment rate is double the national average and the youth unemployment rate is double that again. The population dwindles; old houses become slums; young families move away to leave disproportionate numbers of the old; hospitals and social services are subjected to severe strain. American cities, show us frighteningly where the process can lead if it is not checked.

To reverse it, a good system of public transport is a necessity. Mr Shore, while rejecting the Jubilee Line, offers bigger roads for the East End; but this nostrum, fashionable a decade ago, has been discarded by all informed (and Labour Party) opinion. Underground railways are in our time an urban necessity – this is why they

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are being built anywhere from Washington to Peking. In this respect London's Dockland has never had what it needs; the District Line, as well as being antiquated, is too far to the north. The bus services are lamentable, partly because they have been allowed to deteriorate in London as a whole and partly because the roads have to follow the bends of the river.

In extending the tube system, London Transport can justly be criticised for giving priority to middle-class neighbourhoods. After the Victoria Line, its next project was the Fleet Line, whose first stage – from Baker Street to Charing Cross – will soon be in service. The second stage of the Fleet Line, eastward to Fenchurch Street, can be defended as easing the lot of sardine-packed City office workers; Fenchurch Street, moreover, is the last British Rail commuter terminus not linked to the tube. However, this project was seen by the planners as integrally connected with the Jubilee Line, and the intention was to start work on the two simultaneously. The Jubilee Line itself is designed to provide good modern transport in Dockland; to unite the north and south banks of the river (the line would cross it five times, ignoring the bends) and thus end a separation rendered anachronistic by the dock closures; and finally to make Thamesmead, the down-river development which is now languishing despite the considerable sums of money spent on it, into a real part of London. The plan was to complete the line as far as Silvertown – that is, through all of Dockland – by 1983 and reach Thamesmead by 1985.

The merits of the scheme, in fact, are self-evident from a glance at the map. It's possible that Mr Shore has some notion that he is rebuffing the Tories, who made the Jubilee Line a big plank in their election platform this year. It's also whispered that he thinks he is doing the East End a favour, on the theory that a tube line would induce an influx of middle-class residents. This seems unlikely, considering that the overwhelming bulk of the housing is council property. Anyway, the best judges can surely be found in the Labour movement. The project has been firmly backed by the Labour administration which ruled at County Hall until May 1977, by all five (Labour-controlled) borough councils concerned, and by the environmentalist pressure groups of the East End.

The estimated cost of the line, at £200m, is one-fifth of the £1,000m. which the Treasury is now known to have underspent *in one year* in a frenzy of savage parsimony. In any case, the preponderance of the expense would be incurred in 1980 or later, when the wealth of North Sea oil is supposed to provide ample resources for socially useful investment – or so Mr Callaghan and Mr Healey keep telling us. Perhaps Mr Shore doesn't believe that story. Perhaps he can't muster much enthusiasm for the salvation of working-class London, or of other cities with equivalent needs. Perhaps the strain of office has impaired his capacity for forward planning. This act of ministerial dereliction is a sad reminder that we have a government lacking in faith and vision – a government that lives from day to day.

Paul Johnson

Seven Heretics in Search of a Stake

I hope the Granada TV series on the history of Christianity will make the point that the Christians are no longer an all-powerful, bullying majority, asserting monopoly rights whenever they feel like it, and crushing opponents and critics by force. In fact they are a distinct minority, often a timid and frightened one, ferociously assailed from all quarters and made the invariable scapegoat for any unfashionable activity – imperialism, capitalism, elitism, public school education, etc. – judged to be a secular sin. Christians need protection, like the blacks or any other vulnerable and vilified group, from public mockery and character-assassination. That is why I was delighted to see just for once an ancient law which gives this relief used to wham *Gay News* on the head. Normally, Christians accept abuse meekly – indeed, that is what Christianity is supposed to be about: taking it on both cheeks.

And not only that: instead of presenting a reasonably united front, as a persecuted minority should, the Christians are bitterly divided about how to adjust to their changed status on earth. Some are Adullamites; they want to stick to the adamantine formulae of the past. So we have Archbishop Lefebvre, a religious *pétainiste*, who insists that the Tridentine mass is the only orthodox form of eucharist, though it is barely 400 years old, was concocted at a council notorious for its scandalous bellicosity, and perpetuated by a papal bigot and fool, Pius V, who should never have been canonised.

Not that I have any sympathy for the Archbishop's enemy, Pope Paul Montini. Quite the contrary. Montini, while jealously protecting his own powers and prerogatives, has been happy to impoverish the spiritual lives of millions of ordinary Catholics by encouraging those destructive changes, satirised with such clarity and concision in Brian Moore's brilliant novel, *Catholics*, which have made Rome the capital of mitred atheism and sacerdotal devilry. Montini deserves anything he gets, and I can well believe it is part of the Providential plan that these two obstinate and vain old men should tear each others' eyes out in public.

Anglicanism, by contrast, has no adamantine faction worth speaking of, and is wholly given over to apologies for its own existence. Unlike Lefebvre, it is anxious to convince anyone who is listening that it really believes very little at all, what remains being up for open-ended discussion, as it were. It presents to an indifferent world the image of a decorative and organised shambles, marching purposefully towards nowhere, a kind of Liberal Party of the spirit. Its latest manifestation of life is the publication of a heretical tract called *The Myth of God Incarnate**, which denies the divinity of Christ. I say heretical, though to question the incarnation, that is the idea that God was made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, is to go considerably further than most heresiarchs who were worried about Christ's equality with the Father in the Trinity – not even Arius denied that Jesus was God. In fact to deny the divinity of Christ is to range oneself alongside the Jews and Moslems or such non-Christian sects as the Unitarians. Christ's divinity is explicitly asserted and universally assumed throughout the New Testament.

Until very recently, the magnificent

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passage opening St John's Gospel, which explains and dramatises the incarnation, was an invariable part ('the Last Gospel') of most Christian eucharistic services. St John, in fact, summarises the Christian religion in one beautiful sentence (unforgetably set to music in Sir John Stainer's *The Crucifixion*): 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Of course the point is often made that St John wrote after the synoptic evangelists. This would make no difference even if it were demonstrable. But it is not. It can be argued with as much plausibility that St John's gospel reflects one of the very earliest Christian writings; and it is a curious fact that the first Christian manuscript we possess, a fragment of papyrus dating from the early second century, contains a few verses of St John. But in any case there is no argument that the incarnation, and the resurrection, are the central doctrines of Christianity; they are what essentially distinguish it from any other religion; and anyone who does not accept them, wholly and entirely, is not a Christian at all.

Now Dr Coggan, the low church Archbishop of Canterbury, has chosen to deal with the seven authors of this book by saying that intellectuals always talk nonsense and that only simple folk have a true understanding of God. This is a poor defence; no defence at all, in fact; an abject response from the church of Hooker, Bentley and Berkeley. And it pays the authors the undeserved compliment of assuming that they are intellectuals. Of course they are academics, of a sort. The *Church Times* comments, fatuously: 'All the contributors hold academic posts and draw academic salaries; and they would presumably not choose a title merely because it is catchpenny or catchpound.' Oh, I don't know about that. In my experience there are few categories of people more anxious to acquire notoriety and if possible cash by their writings than dons, especially second-rate ones.

The second-rate can always be recognised by their dependence on jargon, and we have dismal evidence that sociology, which penetrates most solid objects nowadays, from the Government's Doublethink Tank to the mind of Arthur Scargill, has left its greasy thumbprints on theology. Thus, one of the heretical seven, Frances Young, writes of Jesus being 'confessed in many different cultural environments'. When she means 'time' she uses the phrase 'historical environments' and when she means heterodoxy she uses 'variety and pluralism'. People do not simply have different ideas about Jesus but 'a multiplicity of christological affirmations analogous to and dependent upon the multifarious ways in which atonement and salvation have been experienced and expressed'. She admits that 'on the whole the New Testament is totally Christocentric', which is rather like saying that on the whole *Hamlet* is totally about the Prince of Denmark; the statement does not convey information, it is a sociological noise.

On the other hand, she says, to assert the truth of the incarnation would be to make 'living witness and faith' appear as 'improbable scientific fact'. But does not this also apply to all Christian doctrines, indeed to all religious doctrines whatever? Is not God a highly improbable 'scientific fact'? So far as I can tell, the lady does not believe in Christ as God, so she is not a Christian, and I rather doubt if she believes in God at all, as He is not scientific enough. But she cannot bring herself to make these admissions plainly in cold print, and so is driven to fall back on dithering jargon.

Most of the contributors are in this dilemma: willing to wound but yet afraid to strike; or, to vary the metaphor, hesitating to cut the umbilical cord in case it is cold in the world outside the Christian *credo*. That is why I call them heretics rather than non-Christians. Maurice Wiles who, I am dismayed to see, is the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford – but then I suppose there is not so much competition for it nowadays – thinks the incarnation is merely 'an interpretation of the significance of Jesus'. He has a highly misleading, indeed false, comparison between this doctrinal essential and the controversies over transubstantiation, the literal inerrancy of scripture and the virgin birth. Incarnation is 'appropriate to the age in which it arose' rather than 'an unalterable truth'. There is 'a strong case' for its abandonment 'as a metaphysical fact'. On the other hand this 'would not involve the abandonment of all the religious claims normally associated with it'; nor, one assumes, his claims to his professorial chair either.

'Having it Both Ways', then, ought to be the subtitle of this book; none of its authors actually wants to be a Bishop Colenso. But it is plain to me that they would go further if they dared. Michael Goulder admits that what he has written about Jesus 'might be acceptable to a humanist'. I believe him. He has an implausible theory that the incarnation was a Samaritan invention. He thinks 'it is not believable today', which millions of true Christians may find impudent coming from the 'Staff Tutor in Theology in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies in Birmingham University'. He adds: 'The incarnational speculations introduced into the church by Simon Magus and his fellow-Samaritans seem to me entirely dispensable'. But other contributors do not seem to have strong views about the Simon Magus bit, and adduce other reasons, some commercial. Thus Leslie Houlden takes the Christian-salesman line that it is necessary to overthrow the incarnation 'if the Christian message is to make its way in the diverse and multiform worlds of discourse now before it'.

Boldest of the band is one Dennis Nineham, Warden of Keble, a college now better known for its sporting prowess, especially on the river, than its ecclesiology, let alone its piety. Indeed, there is quite an aura of muscular non-Christianity about Mr Nineham; he writes in what he calls 'a situation of galloping cultural change' and says he is pretty sure he knows 'what essentially made [Jesus] tick'. He is worried because the events in the gospels occupied, according to a precise calculation, only a total of three weeks, and Jesus's followers cannot have been watching him all the time. So he may have committed sins, and 'looked on a woman to lust after her'. Not only was Jesus, then, not God incarnate, he might even have been naughty. Anyway, he was not as we imagined him: 'Anyone who walked into a room now as a 20th-century man would not be the historical Jesus, and if Jesus walked into the room now, it could not be as a 20th-century man.' In fact, to put it bluntly, 'if the historical Jesus were to walk into the room in the way suggested above, the first disturbing impression might be not so much of his greatness as of his strangeness'. Mr Nineham is not willing to go along with those of his colleagues who, while half-denying Christ's divinity, concede him uniqueness. What was Jesus then? What was the *point* of him? Just a strange-looking fellow, ticking away, watching the cultural changes gallop? The Warden of Keble is not quite sure; so ends his essays by quoting verbiage by other scholars.

The level of argument in this volume being what it is, I do not really care what any of these people believe. It's a free country, or as they would say a plural and multifarious society, and as individuals they may think what they please. But they are also academics, most of them occupying their posts (I take it) as Anglicans. And the Anglican church is still, to some extent, a uniform body, subject to discipline, holding its places and privileges by virtue of its adherence to certain doctrines. It is established by law and the law, however laxly, is enforceable. Anglican doctrine is summarised in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion which, said Parliament, are to be taken in their 'true, usual and literal' meaning. Now, these Articles have wisely been given a broad interpretation over the centuries, and so Anglican churchmen of all shades have been able to subscribe to them. But this book is in whole and in detail a flat denial of the Articles.

It is not, so far as I can see, reconcilable with Article One: 'Of Faith in the Holy Trinity', And it is a specific denial of Article Two, which is worth quoting:

> The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very Man; who suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile His Father to us . . .

Plain enough, you may say, not to be fudged by talk about myths or galloping cultural change. The book is also an affront, in one way or another, to articles III, IV, V, VIII, XI, XIII, XV, XVII, XVIII, XXIX and XXXI.

The point is simple. Christians may be a minority, but Anglicanism is not a private sect, like the Roman Catholic Church in this country; it is the official religion of the state. Should men be allowed to wear its orders, and occupy privileged positions, by the authority of this faith – and then deny it?

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London Diary

☐ August is the best month of the year in London for those who like listening to music in peaceful surroundings. The crowds go to the proms, the lovers of chamber music to the South Bank Summer Music which provides a concert every night as well as 'seminars' for those who like that sort of thing. I went to the first concert last Monday, the beginning of a series that will include all Beethoven's string quartets. These make a fitting celebration of his 150th anniversary. They stir memories of his centenary which started a life time of concert-going for me. The first concert I ever attended was in Holywell Music Rooms: a bizarre work entitled Homage to Beethoven, words by Tom Driberg, music by Archie Gwynne-Browne (author of that forgotten masterpiece *E.S.P.*). The orchestra was reinforced by typewriters and a lavatory flush. The bust of Beethoven looked on, I hope with disapproval. Later I caught the last notes of the Beethoven centenary in Vienna and that of Schubert the year after. Add to that ten years of a season ticket with the Hallé in Mancheser and my musical education, neglected in Oxford, was adequate if not complete. I shall hear many works I know well during the coming month. I shall no doubt hear a number of others that I have never heard before. It is August, not April, that Browning should have named as the time to be in England and particularly in London.

☐ I had another aesthetic treat when I visited the exhibition at Somerset House devoted to London's River. Some of the paintings are great works of art, some are mainly of topographical interest. One I particularly liked of the latter was a long-distance view of London with St Paul's surrounded by a forest of church spires and towers. Many of these are now gone; the rest are obscured by the monstrous office blocks that have destroyed historic London. Life on the river, as presented in these paintings, has an irresistible impression of bustle and gaiety. I suppose river transport was often cold and wet and sometimes dangerous. But usually it enlivens. People sing when going by water, never on a bus. At Somerset House even the attendants are inspired to gaiety by their surroundings. I have never received a warmer welcome. Top marks, too, for the titles which are in large print and easy to read. It's sad, though, what we have lost. The Thames was once London's main thoroughfare with boats instead of taxis and barges instead of juggernauts. Now it is almost empty except for the launches carrying sightseers down river to Greenwich or up river to Hampton Court. Soon, I suppose, it will be covered over and replaced by high-rise flats. However there has been one victory for enlightenment; the reversion of Somerset House itself to its original purpose. The exhibition rooms are worth the visit for themselves alone and, with pictures such as the present ones, make the best showplace in London.

☐ The opening of Somerset House was one of the few good causes for which I signed an appeal and one of the even fewer that succeeded. On the whole I am a non-signer. If you sign every appeal that comes along, your signature soon loses its value as you can see from the letters of appeal in *The Times*. Moreover, if I sign something I need to know all about it. For instance, I cannot decide where I stand in regard to Archway Road and, not living there, am too lazy to find out. I know where I stand with appeals to save some painting or other as part of our national heritage. English collectors were once rich enough to buy pictures; now if Americans or Arabs are richer still the pictures should go to them. Where would the British Museum be if no works of art had been allowed to leave Egypt or Greece and where would the National Gallery be if no works of art had been allowed to leave Italy? Most of all I doubt whether these appeals do much good except when it is a matter of raising money. I once broke my rule and devoted myself to the cause of Rudolf Hess. His only crime was what Churchill called an act of lunatic benevolence: he tried to make peace between England and Germany. I signed appeals on his behalf; I wrote articles; I went on deputations. Nothing came of it. Hess is still in Spandau and, I fear, will die there. I sometimes wonder whether, if we had made no fuss, the Russians might have let him out one day when no one was looking.

☐ My conscience reproaches me over the Windscale inquiry. I was asked to give evidence of how Great Powers have behaved and gone to war in the past. I thought this farfetched and cried off. But insistence on an inquiry seems to me a good cause and one I ought to support. I am pretty sure that the proposed developments at Windscale will lead to deadly pollution and will endanger future generations. I also think that the promised benefits are greatly exaggerated. Of course I realise the dilemma. Mankind is running out of power. Oil may see the more fortunate countries such as ours through the next 20 years. But it is a wasting asset. Coal cannot fill the gap except again perhaps in this country. Nuclear power, it is said, might turn the scale. But what of its inexorable effects? The scientists at Windscale and elsewhere are operating much as generals often do in wartime: better to do the wrong thing than to do nothing at all. In the past we have assumed that for every problem there is a solution. Nuclear power is not a solution but an evasion. We should do better to seek the right answer. If all the money devoted to nuclear science was switched instead to harnessing the forces of nature we might find a way out. At any rate the Windscale project will end in disaster and it is time we tried something else. However the problem is beyond me. I shall not be here to experience the disaster and can only say with H. G. Wells, 'God damn you all; I told you so.'

☐ I have just said farewell to a faithful bed-companion who has been with me for the last seven years. In 1970 Dick Crossman told me I must read the complete Pepys *Diary* which was just coming out. He also indicated that he hoped to produce a rival. He was right about his advice, though not, I think, about his ambition. Pepys *Diary* is indeed the perfect reading at bed time. You can read just one day if you are tired or go on for a week if you are not. You do not need to remember what you have read from one night to the next. There is not much in the way of a story-line or rather there are many stories which run for a few days and then fade away. There are two puzzles. First, why did Pepys write the *Diary* at all? Resorting often to his own form of shorthand, he clearly did not intend to be read by anyone else and it seems also that he never read it himself. I suppose he was simply a compulsive diary-writer. Secondly, how did he, beginning as a humble clerk, make a considerable fortune at the Navy Office within nine years? This is a topic Pepys does not explore. Now the *Diary* is finished and only the companion volume is still to appear – interesting maybe, but not much fun. What shall I take to bed next? I suppose Macaulay's *Letters*.

☐ The most interesting, though not the most welcome, news of the week was the *Which?* verdict that dogs are a better buy than cats. The judgment may be statistically sound; it is wrong on any basis of common sense. Cats pay for themselves by keeping down mice and rats. They keep themselves clean. They are independent and go out by themselves when they go out at all. Dogs have to be taken for walks. They fight with other dogs. They demand affection and are said to be man's best friend. I prefer the purr of a cat when it is being stroked, the more so since this is a sign of sensual pleasure and not a display of affection. There is a decisive argument in favour of cats and against dogs. Dr Johnson never kept a dog. He always kept a cat. No dog is mentioned in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. Hodge has achieved immortality.

A. J. P. Taylor

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ You can spot the objectors only by the few beards and sports jackets, and their papers stored in apple boxes. Those of the judge and British Nuclear Fuels are filed in specially-made boxes. Inevitably, a social life has developed. Opponents are on first-name terms. There are a five-a-side football tournament, a mid-term beach barbecue. An end-of-inquiry party is planned. – Report on Windscale in *Daily Express* (Ron Grechalgh)

☐ A mounted traffic warden will be used to help control congestion on the busiest pony trekking route in the country, the Black Mountains area of South Wales – *Guardian* (John O'Sullivan)

☐ For *Salo*, the Cinecenta spokesman said, the audience was 'not the normal mackintosh brigade. These people were Pasolini followers, ladies in cocktail dresses and gentlemen in evening suits.' – *Guardian* (Gerald Kaufman)

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Mervyn Jones

A Young Man's Game

All is bustle – though subdued bustle, with conversation at a murmuring level – under the great vault of the Corn Exchange in Brighton. Lads in their teens with masses of hair walk briskly to and fro or grab passing friends by the arm. Outside in the public gardens, one overhears: 'That's my foot you're treading on.' 'Shut up, Podgy.' Entering in ignorance, you might be surprised to learn what these young people have in common. They are chess-players.

At a competitive level (which means anything from Leeds versus Bradford to the world championship) chess is a young man's game. It makes demands on a particular faculty of the mind, recognised but scarcely understood, which develops early; this faculty is also the source of excellence in music, mathematics and physics. Moreover, match play requires good physical health and real stamina. Champions put in time in the gymnasium; some go in for cross-country running.

I'm here for the opening day of the 64th British Chess Congress. It's called a congress because there are various events. There is the championship, open only to entrants who have forged their way through a tough series of qualifying contests (and they must be British or Commonwealth citizens). There are lesser championships: under 21, under 18, under 16, under 14, under 11, Ladies, Girls under 18, Girls under 14. And there is the open tournament, which anyone may enter. Some players in the tournament are foreigners, either making a special visit or combining it with a holiday in England.

On the table beside each board is a clock with two dials. White's clock ticks away while he is considering his move; when he moves, he presses a knob which stops his clock and starts Black's. A player in the championship must make 40 moves in 2½ hours – that's 2½ hours of his own time, so a game of 40 moves lasts five hours, and this is the average duration. (In the junior events the time is somewhat faster.) Beyond 40 moves, the required rate is 16 moves in an hour. The championship players are playing in the afternoon session, of five hours. If the game isn't concluded, it's resumed after a break for the evening, and if necessary next morning. This goes on, a free Sunday intervening, for 12 days. In the world of what's called work, few people I know exert their powers to the utmost for five hours a day.

Nobody knows how many people in this country play chess at odd times with friends, like me. However, 25,000 are keen enough to join clubs, of which just over 1,000 are recognised by the British Chess Federation. The BCF has one paid secretary, Mr Paul Buswell, who runs it from his home in Norwich. There isn't much money about; congresses are usually sponsored, this year's by Collingwood, the jewellers, who use the occasion to put on display a magnificent silver and gold set. The first prize in the championship is £750, and the first prize for ladies £200. Britain has few chess professionals, though it's possible to make a living from a combination of prize-money and chess journalism. Outstanding chess players are generally teachers or university lecturers, engineers, data processors, or something of the kind.

Women don't make the top grade. The entrants for the championship are all men, and even in the under-11 they're all boys. In the open tournament, indeed, there's only one woman – a Mme Haik from France who showed up at the last moment. Mr Buswell suggests tentatively that women lack competitive drive; it's a possible explanation, though Wimbledon would seem to rebut it. It's also possible that women prefer concrete to abstract thinking, and this is why they write such good novels. Anyway, only a small number of the 25,000 chess club members are women, so the odds are against many of them reaching the higher levels. Mr Buswell says that he knows only one woman, the Czech-born Mrs Jana Hartston, strong enough to play against the men. (In chess parlance players are always referred to as strong, not just good.) Mrs Hartston might well qualify for the championship, but she's decided to enter the ladies' section, where she has an excellent chance of winning and carrying off the £200.

Similarly, a boy has the choice of trying to get into the championship or staying in the section limited to his age-group. Everyone is delighted that the 1977 championship is the youngest ever; 14 of the 40 entrants are teenagers. Most of the recognised strong players are in their twenties or at most their thirties. A familiar figure is Dr Jonathan Penrose, who won the championship ten times between 1958 and 1969. But observers don't expect him to stage a comeback. He is 43.

The championship player we're all talking about is Nigel Short, aged 12 and the youngest entrant ever. He learned to play at five and joined a club at seven. Later this year he's entering for the world under-17 contest. Also, on Sunday he'll be one of ten players matched against Anatoly Karpov, the world champion, in simultaneous games. I go along on Monday morning when Nigel meets the press, and hear him telling BBC radio that he intends to be world champion 15 years from now. Nigel's father, a Manchester PR man, is helping in the production of a book called *Nigel Short's Chess Games*, with analysis by Nigel Short.

I return to the Corn Exchange and wander round the boards. In the under-11 section there are three boys called Lee, one of whom has Chinese features – can he be any kin to Lee Kuan Yew? They aren't related, but there is nevertheless a chess family called Lee, rivals to another chess family called Hockaday. Each is represented in the under-11 section, the under-14 section and the tournament. Lee *père* is playing against a German called Dr Cherubim, who looks like the Good German in a play about the Nazis ('can zis be happening in ze land of Schiller and Beethoven?'). Sheldon Lee (under-14) gets a draw after a long, tense game. Darren Lee (under-11) is playing against Jimmy Hockaday. The game lasts longer than any other in its section and draws quite a crowd. Eventually, Jimmy resigns and Darren says he wants to go for a swim.

The real event – the championship – starts after lunch. Spectators lean on a rail which guards the players' enclosure. I observe the chess and the lifemanship with equal fascination. There are two alternative ploys. You can gaze fixedly at the board throughout, giving the impression that a mighty brain is at work taking account of every possibility for 20 moves ahead. Or, having moved, you can get up and stroll about – look at the other boards, chat with family and friends, fetch coffee from the bar. This implies that you're confident enough to switch off. Nigel Short is definitely a walker.

He's playing against Ken Neat, aged 33, physics Ph.D. and champion of Tyne and Wear, who did better than anyone else in the 1977 qualifying rounds. Nevertheless, he fidgets, he shifts his chair, twists strands of his beard, and comes on like the man whose wife and mistress have met. At 3.30, Nigel has castled and achieved a beautiful open formation. Ken's pieces are defensively bunched, one bishop unable to move.

I go to watch Jana Hartston who has boldly advanced her queen. Half an hour later I return. While Nigel is mooching about, Ken takes 20 minutes to move. Rather cheerlessly, he advances his rook to Q4. Nigel sits down; Ken gets up to stretch his legs. But within two minutes Nigel makes a move which reveals Ken's as pointless. Ken ponders for ten minutes more and pulls the rook back to Q2.

I push off for a stroll by the sea, and return to find that Nigel and Ken have swapped some pieces but are still level-pegging. At 6.25 Ken moves to threaten a strategic centre pawn. It's the same rook coming up to Q4. Nigel whips a knight into position, saving his pawn and threatening the rook. The rook retires to Q2 again. At seven o'clock it's at Q4 for the third time. But I want to catch a London train.

I learn later that the players adjourn and settle down again for the evening. The game is drawn at 10.15, after six and a half hours' play. Jonathan Penrose has drawn too. In the ladies' section, Jana Hartston is a winner.

Chess is a small, passionate, intense world. It's everything for the initiate and nothing for the outsider. Clearly, leaning against a rail and gazing at a static board for ten or 20 minutes isn't everybody's idea of how to spend an August day in Brighton. It isn't even like a chess championship in Russia, where the play is reproduced on electronically-operated boards up on the wall, hundreds of fans sit in rows, and strong moves are greeted with shouts of '*Ochen khorosho!*'. If all goes well, Nigel will know what that's like one day. But there must be plenty of 12-year-olds between Minsk and Irkutsk who plan to be world champion at 27.

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

The Tall Gentleman

When I am fortunate enough to have visitors staying with me in Devon, they are usually kind enough to accompany me on a leisurely stroll through the orchard to our spacious and splendidly stocked village shops (we have, surprisingly, three of them). American visitors especially find the goods therein displayed, and the people purchasing them, an interesting sight and so when a married couple from Wisconsin came to stay with me five years ago, it was to these shops that one morning we made our way – a tall gentleman, a less tall lady, and me. We went into our nearest all-purpose grocery and were examining the range of biscuits on a shelf hard by the jams and pickles section when I felt a tug at my elbow. There was nice Mrs Harding, late of London and in her day a great theatre-goer (we play dear old 78s together and bemoan the arrival of the kitchen sink). 'Excuse me, but isn't that tall gentleman Alfred Lunt?' It was a proud moment. 'Yes, it is,' I said. 'And of course Lynn Fontanne?' 'Yes indeed. The Lunts.' I feel as happily boastful now as I felt happily boastful then. That's what contact with greatness does for some of us. Forgive it, and remember that if God himself came down on earth and had a chat with you while you were thinning out your lettuces, the first thing that you would want to do later would be to fly off and brag about it to your chums ('But I tell you, Enid, He was *there*! ').

They were certainly Gods to me. I first saw them in *Caprice*, a thinnish piece as the title implies, at the St James's Theatre, London, in 1929. For years the stage had had an accepted style of comedy acting. An actor would come to the end of a speech and then it was, so to speak, somebody else's turn to talk. No performer would dream of starting up until another had finished (it worked all right – think of *The Importance of Being Earnest*). The Lunts turned all this topsy-turvy. They spoke as people do in life. They overlapped each other, they threw away lines, they trod on words, they whispered, they shouted, and from this realistic jumble (have you ever heard a recording of a dinner party conversation? Everybody yells and nobody ever finishes a sentence) the essentials emerged. And they had in addition enormous elegance and charm and, in Lynn's case, great beauty ('I wasn't much to look at when I was young,' she once said, 'but I got a little better as time went on'). Between them, they dazzled and glittered and high comedy acting has never been the same since.

I first met them, as indissoluble then as they still are now, even though death has had a go at separating them, in London during the war. They had arrived from America very courageously via Lisbon and the dangerous air passage which had already cost the life of Leslie Howard. They were shortly to open in *There Shall Be No Night*. I was goggle-eyed with excitement and admiration (the 1930s had brought us *Reunion in Vienna* and *Amphitryon 38*). They could clearly recognise a demented fan when they saw one and they were very kind and understanding. Lynn's beautiful hair was arranged in two large and lustrous swags, if that be the word, with a bunch of fresh violets tucked in between them.

She wondered if they needed watering. Would I please have a look and perhaps sprinkle a few drops of water on them from time to time. She told me that the sides of their double bed in their hotel were higher than the bit in the middle, which tended to roll them together and that this was much jollier than the converse. She added, *à propos de rien*, that it is extremely difficult to keep up a squabble in a double bed. Alfred asked me if I had ever heard of a famous American actress called Mrs Minnie Fiske, who could be absent-minded. Going once backstage after a first night to congratulate the performers, she entirely forgot the purpose of her visit, opened the dressing-room door of the expectantly waiting leading lady, shouted through it 'Goodnight, goodnight' and, disappearing down the passage, was seen no more. I was their slave from then on.

Alfred was in every way a perfectionist, whether he was cooking or gardening or acting. Taking, with his devoted dresser and friend, Jules, the *cordon bleu* examination in Paris, he had trembled even more violently than on a first night ('I had to ask the lady next to me to switch on my stove'). I doubt if they ever gave a performance in which they did not try to improve something and it was alleged that before the final night of *Love in Idleness*, a company rehearsal was called. I was lucky enough to be allowed to watch them rehearsing this delightful play and to see the elaborate jigsaw of their acting being assembled piece by piece. They repeated a dozen times, and then either rejected or adopted, a bit of stage business that might take only a second to do but which would add point to a line. You may say that this is what all actors do, but it can never have been done with more devotion and dedication and expertness. And, indeed, success. During the actual run of a play, Alfred's performance never satisfied him ('If only you had come *last* night,' he used to wail, 'instead of tonight. I was awful.'). Alfred's pronunciation of 'awful' came out to an English ear as 'offal' and pleased his friends.

Happily staying with them in Alfred's charming old family house near Milwaukee, or in Florida where they sometimes spent the winter, it was delightful to find them still discussing whether, in 1935, it had been right to cut a certain scene in *The Taming of the Shrew*. 'Alfred, I could have got a laugh in that scene.' 'Oh no, Lynnie, no, it was a dull scene and better out of the way.' 'Alfred, there was a *laugh* there . . .': and so on. Entirely modest (their fame meant nothing to them and they seemed to be hardly aware of it), they could not wait, like all the most agreeable actors, to tell of theatrical moments when things had gone wrong.

There was the famous occasion when, on tour, the theatre's stalls had flooded and they had, of course, played on across a sea of water to the upper parts of the house (a lady's flowered hat fell from the dress circle and floated merrily to and fro). There had been the night when, in *Elizabeth the Queen*, Alfred, as Essex, had buried his face too violently in Lynn's generously bejewelled bosom and had broken the strings of her pearls, which shot about all over the stage, one of them becoming embedded in Alfred's nostril. There had been, in New York, the daunting dress rehearsals before the dour and chilly and unsmiling board of the Theatre Guild, whom Alfred addressed at curtain fall ('Playing light comedy to you is like trying to feed a soufflé to a horse').

And how dearly he loved to laugh, and never unkindly – at human oddities and behaviour, at unusual performers (there was a largish cabaret artiste called Miss Baby Dumpling), at TV advertisements (a very English actor unconvincingly rigged up as a guzzling Italian and intoning joyously '*Mamma mia*, was dat a spicy meat-ball!'). Nobody enjoyed it more than he when, in the index of a book by Godfrey Winn, he misprintedly appeared as 'Mildred Lunt'. For some time after, he signed his letters 'Mildred'. I can hear him chuckling still.

This Scotland

☐ Last week, we wrongly reported that Mr Robert Baillie, of Hazlewood Gardens, Rutherglen, was involved in a car accident while driving an Allegro. Mr Baillie, in fact, was driving a Marina. – *Rutherglen Reformer* (A. L. Stewart)

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Letters to the Editor

Where Does the Buck Stop?

Sir, Perhaps the strangest and most disturbing aspect of the Liddle Towers Case (NS 29 July) is the refusal of the authorities to allow the case to be subject to public examination. This refusal is the more remarkable for the fact that public concern over the case appears to be increasing with the passage of time – now 18 months since Liddle's death.

What the public is presently left with is an inquest verdict of 'justifiable homicide' which is widely accepted to be perverse in the extreme. In no way can it be justifiable for the police – and there were eight of them involved in the arrest – to kill someone whose greatest 'crime' (according to the police version) was being drunk and disorderly. In finding that the police killed Liddle all the inquest achieved was to discredit the only official police account yet given (and that for the most part given by police officers who exercised their right not to be cross-examined).

Little surprise, therefore, that most people expected that the police would either be charged with a criminal offence or that there would be some form of public inquiry.

It was to say the least unfortunate that both the murder investigation and the police complaint were conducted by the same police force. It was particularly unfortunate that the force should until recently have included the area served by the police officers who were the subject of the two investigations.

When the DPP considered the evidence in these files he decided that it was insufficient to warrant criminal proceedings. This decision may well have had more to do with problems of identification than conduct, and in any case in no way passes judgment on the way the police as a whole behaved during and after the arrest. The public were still entitled to an explanation.

The Chief Constable who had earlier stated that it was an 'operational' matter and so of no concern to the Police Authority refused to meet Liddle Towers's family, their lawyers or the Liddle Towers Committee. He eventually agreed to meet the committee chairman on the condition that no one else from the committee attended and that the press were not informed of the meeting. The secrecy continued when the Police Authority itself – following a meeting from which the press and public had been excluded and against the Chief Constable's advice – decided to meet the Liddle Towers Committee.

So on Thursday 28 July four members of our committee attended this specially convened meeting of the Police Authority – to which a little over half the members turned up. Item One was to exclude press and public. Item Two was to advise us that there would be no discussion with us – we were merely to speak and leave (this, incidentally, makes the decision to exclude the press from this part of the meeting particularly strange). We spoke for an hour putting the case for a public inquiry. We were asked to leave and the meeting continued – privately – to consider whether they should support the demand for an inquiry. Once again the Chief Constable was able to argue his case for doing nothing without challenge from the family and behind closed doors.

The decision noted that the family had other legal remedies open to it and considered that an inquiry would not be appropriate. Those 'other remedies' are private criminal or civil actions. But whose responsibility is it to establish why it was necessary for the police to kill someone? Aside from the prohibitive costs involved in litigation, and the fact that the family certainly don't want any financial compensation for Liddle's death, it is unlikely that a court is the right forum for conducting a full investigation of the situation. But in any case should this burden be thrown on the individual? It is after all a public police force. In return for public confidence, the police force owes a public duty of account. If the Chief Constable refuses to provide it, then the Police Authority or the Home Secretary should do so.

Under the Police Acts the Police Authority is charged with a duty of maintaining an adequate and efficient police force. Public confidence goes to the very root of that efficiency and once that confidence is threatened as in this case then it is difficult to recover. The Chief Constable says nothing, does nothing: the Police Authority listens and passes the responsibility back to the family: the Home Secretary listens but is advised that he cannot intervene in an individual case, he needs more cases – more evidence of police violence – another death perhaps.

If that's what they want before they will act we have no alternative but to collect that evidence. But is this really our job, when all we seek is an explanation for a death?

DAVID GRAY

Liddle Towers Committee
42 Cherryburn Gardens
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

The Great Australian Emptiness

Sir, When an article is as arrogant and sneering, as inaccurate and unbalanced, as that by Michael Dean on Australia in last week's NS, one is tempted not to bother to reply. But lest your readers accept such a false picture of Australia, perhaps I may be permitted to attempt to redress the balance.

The following are some of Michael Dean's comments which seem to this writer to be unsupportable and misleading. 'You have to be seen to be better than other men in a way that admits no argument' . . . 'Australians are chronically nervous about holding opinions on anything that requires a value judgment' . . . 'a culture that confuses style with quality' . . . 'women are not to be mixed with except for sex' . . . 'its gun toting police' . . . 'there is a casual kind of racialism at every level of society'.

To this writer at least, the Australian people, if a society which is one third first generation migrants can be so described, are cheerful, self-reliant and enterprising, more industrious than the British though less industrious than the Americans, and less hung up than the British on sex and class. Health services are of high standard and a higher proportion of people attend university in Australia than in Britain.

In Sydney, the city I happen to know best, there are any number of small art galleries, theatres and jazz groups as well as the larger museums and the Opera House. Nor do I feel shame, as Michael Dean seems to think I should, that I don't want to live far into the outback with its freezing winters, intolerable summers and incessant flies when I can live in Sydney with its marvellous climate, vibrant life-style and breathtaking views and surf beaches all around.

PETER ABELSON

20 St Petersburgh Place
London W2

Britain's Voice Abroad

Sir, May I make a plea to save the BBC World Service from the think tank on behalf of the *domestic* listener? Axing the English-speaking programmes would cut out 50 per cent of my radio listening. Where else am I to get hard knowledge at breakfast time? Not on condescending Radio 4 where the assumption is that the listener's concentration can only last a couple of minutes without a booster injection of trivia. And at night, how else am I to keep my finger on the world's pulse? (Night workers, too, have an appetite for news). Where else am I going to get hourly foreign news coverage? It may, as the CPRS evidently believe, be bad manners to tell people in the rest of the world what is going on in their own countries; but what about telling people in our country what is going on in the rest of the world?

Since the hardening of the intellectual class distinction between Radios 1, 2, 4 and 3 (proles, old proles, middlebrows and intelligentsia) and the further segregation of information and music, news, imprisoned in the middlebrow channel, has become middlebrow too. Even the occasional programme which deals at length with something of more than parochial interest is curiously without body, the radio equivalent of keg bitter or Golden Delicious apples. As for us intellectuals, our channel doesn't go in much for news; maybe we know it all already, or (like the CPRS) have abandoned reality as a bad job and just want art without end.

We have radio for the common man. BBC World Service is the nearest we get these days to radio for the serious man. It is also an informative service which can cross frontiers and not be impounded in customs. Nothing on the jammed night air matches its telegraphic conciseness and objectivity. The world depends on it. In this age of loss of conviction (the British malaise) it represents the one proselytising faith left in us, the propagation not of the gospel but of information. This is a faith which lustier regimes do not share. It is a faith which the CPRS does not share. The listeners, who do share it, and they are by far the biggest audience of any station in the world, mostly do not have the vote here, they have no muscle to influence what the government eventually decides. The fate of this, the chief of what Auden called those 'ironic points of light' rests with a handful of people. If the decision goes against the World Service I doubt if it would cause much fuss outside Bush House. Only a few night birds and hard news addicts like myself would ever notice that

Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies.

At first, that is.

PETER CATOR

9 Castellain Road
London W9

Silent Echo

Sir, I don't want to argue at length with John Mapplebeck's light piece on the Darlington journalists' dispute (NS 5 August) other than to say I find it slightly surprising that as someone steeped in television, where the story is often told directly through the person concerned, he nevertheless finds it disturbing that newspapers during editorial disruption and (only to a limited extent) have gone back to using the story direct from the person involved. It should be pointed out that somewhere in the production process a journalist's skills are still used, presuming of course the NUJ would concede that an editor continues to possess journalistic skills.

Dispute or no dispute, I believe there is a

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danger occasionally that the intermediary effect of a journalist's professional interpretation can deprive an item of a zest it might possess purely and simply through its amateurism. One of the country's most successful national newspapers runs very largely on readers' letters and contributions, much to the annoyance of some within newspaper trade unions. I would be the last person to suggest that non-journalists could satisfactorily staff a daily newspaper. I have a pile of assignments on my desk that were never fulfilled despite eight and a half weeks' running during the strike. They were not touched because we had no journalist spare to enter the minefields of law and administration the assignments presented. That should not conceal the fact that many readers appeared to move closer towards this paper in its deeply troubled times, to give its editor whatever help they could, whenever they could. I fear it is the reader whose case is most neglected in the closed shop dispute.

BRIAN NICHOLLS
Editor

Evening Despatch
Darlington

Sir, John Mapplebeck reverses the point in his 'clever' final paragraph in his article on the strike by my NUJ journalists. I, as editor of the *Northern Echo*, have never thought about using parochial news written 'by amateur readers', nor am I talking about confining my future staff 'to recruits from the *Lady*'.

I am not talking about confining recruits to any particular kind of journalist at all. It is the NUJ which is doing that. I think a lively newspaper needs journalists of every shade of opinion; radicals, liberals and, dare I say it, even the odd right-winger. As I say it is not me who is talking about confining recruits to any particular classification, as Mr Mapplebeck implies – it is the NUJ. That is why they are seeking a post-entry closed shop.

On the point of size of staff Mr Mapplebeck should not be too worried. The W. T. Stead he so much admires produced the *Northern Echo* by himself with one sub-editor.

DON EVANS
Editor

The Northern Echo
Darlington

Sir, As an historian and in particular as the historian of the *Northern Echo* – who moreover was Harold Evans's chief-of-staff and deputy in the 1960s – I could only goggle in disbelief at the gross factual inaccuracies in John Mapplebeck's article. They include references which require a reply from the present editor. To that I will add no more than that Don Evans succeeded his accidental namesake a dozen years ago; that over those years the paper has built on and developed what was brought about by Harry Evans in the early 1960s, including further design awards; and that it is both untruthful and the height of absurdity (and discourtesy) to write as though Harry's 'regime' ended yesterday.

However, Mr Mapplebeck's carelessness with fact is nowhere more incredibly evident than in his reference to 'moving advertisements off the front page' of a regional morning newspaper in the 1960s. That happened 60 years earlier, on 19 April 1904.

MAURICE WEDGEWOOD
Deputy Editor

The Northern Echo
Darlington

Jury Challenges

Sir, The article on the front page of your issue of 29 July deals with a matter which I have long thought needed urgent public examination, the right to challenge jurors; my concern, however, is for a very different reason from yours. In several cases in recent years it has been difficult to escape the impression that sharp lawyers have 'fiddled' the system to secure juries composed largely of people who by their background and life style might be expected to take a view of the charges their clients are facing that was favourable to the defence. If there have been any grounds for this suspicion the juries secured have been no more representative of a general public consensus than the 12 selected by the arbitrary sample method which you criticise. I agree with you that before any change was promulgated there should have been public debate and expert scrutiny.

Not only do I disagree with the general slant of your article but I think that two of your allegations must be strongly rebutted. First, anyone who has tried to get behind the class warfare propaganda to discover what happened on the Shrewsbury building sites will not accept your implication that only an unrepresentative jury would have convicted the picket leaders. Second, I regard your snide insinuation that Labour lawyers support increased legal aid only to line their own pockets as slanderous and contemptible. I see no reason to believe that the integrity of Labour lawyers is not at least as high as that of Labour journalists.

D. C. KELLY

46 Stevenage Road
Knebworth
Herts.

Safe Deliverance

Sir, A. J. P. Taylor knows more history than I do, but he takes a slanted view of it. It is not true (London Diary, 5 August) that the idealism of today is (always) the realism of tomorrow. All kinds of idealisms have perished without trace. He selects that of the CND, which, of course, was mainly for unilateral nuclear disarmament. If that had prevailed 20 years ago, Taylor would now be writing from Gulag on lavatory paper, not in a free press. And well he knows it.

W. S. BROWNLIE

19 Hunterhill Road
Paisley

Protecting Our Lord

Sir, The current strategy of the humanist/homosexual lobby is all too apparent. It is clearly engaged in a propaganda exercise to associate me personally, and therefore the recent blasphemy case, with a calculated attack on homosexuals, thereby endeavouring to discredit not only me, but the blasphemy law itself as a first step in its campaign to get that law repealed.

As always with propaganda, truth is the first casualty. Denis Cobell (Letters 24 July) of the Lewisham Humanist Group infers that my claim that the Albany Trust was 'misusing public money' was an attack on homosexuals. Not at all. It dealt with the Trust's attitude to the paedophile lobby. He selectively quotes from my book *Whatever Happened to Sex?* in order, of course, to attribute to me motives I do not possess. May I quote what I actually said?

> Homosexuals have as much right to be fully understood, to be treated with compassionate love as the rest of us. And as people they should be 'judged', no more and no less, than are those of us whose problems are perhaps less obvious but equally undesirable . . . The natural repugnance which most people feel when homosexuality and lesbianism is mentioned can result in a harshness of attitude and thinking which is, at least, unhelpful and certainly as unChristian as the perverse practices which are condemned. But to go to the other extreme and elevate people suffering from such abnormalities into a norm for society not only threatens society but is dangerous to the individuals themselves, since it excludes them from the consideration of treatment. Society, to its shame, once hurled that word at the homosexual. In our crazy 'value-free' society the 'shame' is now attached only to those who dare say that homosexuality is less than 'gay'.

One hopes that the informed readers of the NEW STATESMAN are already aware of the actual – rapidly diminishing – membership of the highly vocal and militant British Humanist Association. Its annual report for 1976-77 claims a membership of 1,886. More than Rome burns while the rest of us fiddles!

MARY WHITEHOUSE

Ardleigh
Colchester

Praise from Poe

Sir, Poe 'never had a good word to say of any other writer, living or dead': Kingsley Amis last week.

Poe praised, often perceptively, Dickens, Tennyson, Mrs Browning, Lowell, Lytton, Hawthorne, many others. He praised, often extravagantly, fifty American writers now forgotten.

Mr Amis should get some reading in.

JULIAN SYMONS

147 Ramsden Road
London SW12

KINGSLEY AMIS *writes*: I was following Poe's room-mate at West Point Thomas Gibson, who wrote: 'Whether it were Shakespeare or Byron, Addison or Johnson – the acknowledged classic or the latest poetaster – all came in alike for his critical censure . . . I never heard him speak in terms of praise of any English writer [i.e. writers in English], living or dead.' No doubt he found later that there was money in praise.

No Tame Hearts They

Sir, As I have no wish to be transfixed by arrows next time I'm in the neighbourhood of Leamington Spa, I must make it clear that I know – and wrote last week – that the motto of the Grand National Archery Society is 'Union, True Heart, and Courtesie'. It wasn't my fault that it appeared as 'Tame Heart'. Some malign foe with a crossbow was intent to make bad blood, I doubt not.

MERVYN JONES

10 Waterside Place
London NW1

Far Flung Corners

Sir, May I use your columns to congratulate Trevor Whittall of Singapore on winning last week's crossword competition?

TIM HOPKINS

69 Edgewood Drive
Luton
Bedfordshire

Sir, I have entered your crossword competition only once, and I won. Evidently, E8 is a good alternative to Singapore. I would therefore suggest that competitors who do not know any overseas residents willing to send in their entries for them should find someone with a suitably proletarian address in Britain. I myself would be happy to perform this function for a percentage of any winnings.

HILARY CLARKE

43 Dalston Lane
London E8

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Michael Davie

Potato Masher

Nixon vs Nixon by DAVID ABRAHAMSEN, M.D. *Farrar Straus Giroux* £3.50
The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler by ROBERT G. WAITE *Harper & Row* £7.95

According to one account, the now-fashionable 'psychohistory' was invented by Professor Richard E. Neustadt at Harvard, in the Sixties. In his book *Presidential Power*, published in 1960, Neustadt had considered the effect of personality on presidential decision-making; later, he taught a course in which he discussed how American voters could learn more about the psychological make-up of presidents before electing them. Pupils of his, taking the hint, soon began to look to psychoanalysis for help in making judgments about presidents.

The practice was sanctified by Freud's essay on Leonardo da Vinci, and by his collaboration, with William C. Bullitt, on a study of Woodrow Wilson. During World War II, William Langer had produced a psychoanalytic study of Hitler that correctly predicted his suicide – which gave some standing to the notion of long-range psychological assessment. The CIA caught the habit. In the Seventies, CIA analysts produced two studies of Daniel Ellsberg (the second one concluded that he had released the Pentagon Papers to punish his father). More recently, Professor Doris Kearns, having listened to the ramblings of President Lyndon B. Johnson in his retirement, attempted to analyse his 'psychic structure' with the aid of the Group for Applied Psychoanalysis, connecting his political behaviour in Washington with the treatment he had had from his mother on the banks of the Pedernales River.

Kearns was a Ph.D. in government when she wrote her book. The author of the new psychohistory of Nixon is a practising psychoanalyst, and a Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. In his own eyes, at least, he is highly qualified: 'My fundamental concepts, he tells us, 'are based upon my years of training and experience and rest upon a vast body of scientific knowledge.' His aim has been to understand 'the psychodynamics that determined Nixon's make-up'.

Now the snag is, as Dr Abrahamsen plaintively writes, that Nixon 'refused' to see him, and 'it is hardly likely' that Nixon 'will submit to a psychiatric interview by me, or anyone else'. So Dr Abrahamsen, whose main interest is naturally in Nixon's childhood, where the evidence is least easy to come by, has had to make do with what he has been able to glean from surviving relations and published sources. This dependence on scraps of information can lead to odd results. Nixon's mother once said that Nixon as a child was an outstanding potato masher: 'He never left any lumps.' Dr Abrahamsen comments:

> Nixon's fascination with potato mashing has psychoanalytic implications. Most children his age release aggression through play, athletics, and peer-group activities. What is unusual in Richard is that he chose to release his energy through potato mashing, which was one way to be close to his mother, to win her love, to be her favourite. The extent and intensity of this activity might suggest that his potato mashing was a form of aggression against an inanimate object which was a substitute for people. Potato mashing allowed this apparently tense and moody child to express his unconscious anger.

What is one to make of this analysis? Either you believe it, or you don't. The test of psychiatry, as traditionally practised on patients face to face with their psychiatrist over months or years, is whether psychiatric treatment helps the patient to cope better with the circumstances of his life. But no test at all can be applied to Dr Abrahamsen's theories.

For instance, Dr Abrahamsen's whole book rests on the thesis that Nixon is both orally and anally fixated. How does he know? The evidence is as follows:

> In contrast to Harold, his quiet elder brother, Richard 'was known in the family as a screamer'. The first characteristic that struck Hannah [his mother] was his 'decided voice'.

Dr Abrahamsen goes on: 'A psychiatrist or pediatrician would reason that he was either uncomfortable and needed attention, or felt lonely and wanted company.' Nixon 'was a person who had been cheated out of love. He wanted it back at all costs'. So his oral fixations took him into politics: his debating and 'incessant talking' and speechmaking constituted 'an attempt to regain what he had lost in the first year of his life'.

His anal fixations caused his secrecy, and the desire to control others. The evidence for anal fixation is as thin as the evidence for oral fixation: little more than some allegedly 'representative' remarks on the White House tapes, such as, 'I have broken my ass to try to get the facts of this case', and 'I don't give a shit for the lira'.

Even if we accept Dr Abrahamsen's analysis, where does it get us? Not very far. He describes Nixon not only as a psychopath but also as a 'paranoid personality' and 'abnormal'. The obvious (and interesting) question arises: how far did Nixon's abnormality affect his decisions as President? Certainly there are episodes in Nixon's career that seem to demand a psychiatric explanation: his disturbed telephoning and wanderings round Washington after the Kent State massacre, when he talked to bewildered students about Neville Chamberlain and football; his still unexplained ordering of the nuclear alert during the last Middle East war; above all, perhaps, his installation of the White House taping system.

But Dr Abrahamsen, when he comes up to the wire, suddenly backs off.

> While on the surface it would seem that many of his White House decisions were based on national interests, he reacted mostly to public issues under the influence of his personality needs. It is impossible to differentiate between when he was acting dispassionately and when he was acting out of his deeply ingrained instinctual drives.

What is the point of psychohistory if it is helpless when faced with the key question?

The least convincing part of the book is Dr Abrahamsen's sudden announcement, on p.201 of a 248-page book, that Nixon 'sought failure'. 'The need to fail stemmed from his guilt feelings [which] were rooted in his early sexual yearning for his mother.' He punished himself by arranging his own failures. But did he? Kennedy beat him by a whisker in 1960; but it wasn't Nixon who stuffed the ballot boxes in Cook County which gave Kennedy the victory. Nixon was beaten for the governorship of California in 1962; but it wasn't Nixon who arranged the Cuba missile crisis which had a crucial effect on the vote. On Watergate, Dr Abrahamsen says: 'Did Nixon wish to save himself? The answer simply is no.' One doubts whether Haldeman and Ehrlichman, whom Nixon threw to the wolves, would agree with that verdict.

Dr Abrahamsen displays little sense either of politics or of history. Professor Waite, the author of a new psychohistory of Hitler, is an historian. 'Psychology should be seen as a supplement to other legitimate modes of historical inquiry, not as a substitute for them.' This is a reasonable posture, and Professor Waite has, in Hitler, a better subject than Nixon – perhaps the best psychohistorical subject in history.

Professor Waite begins by describing some of Hitler's characteristics, assessing the evidence and giving his sources like an orthodox historian, so that the reader soon learns to trust his scrupulousness and his knowledge. We learn many strange details. One of Hitler's favourite films was *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. He beat the walls if contradicted (though he never chewed the carpet); frequently watched film strips, specially made for him, of the execution of criminals; hated the moon; admired among English historical figures only Henry VIII and Cromwell, because they chopped off heads; unconsciously whistled 'Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?'; protected ravens; wore long white underwear in the hottest weather; and liked women to urinate on him. Six of the seven women with whom he is known to have had sexual relations committed or seriously attempted suicide. We also learn that he suffered a 'primal scene trauma' through seeing, or thinking he saw, his parents having intercourse.

Few people would maintain, having read Professor Waite's catalogue of Hitler's derangements, that a psychiatric explanation of them would be out of place. The point here is that there are undeniable links

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between his obsessions and the policies followed by Germany under his leadership. 'Blood', he said 'is the cement of civilisation.' He liked to watch leeches suck the blood from his own body. He had his doctor save his blood in test tubes so that he could gaze at it. He was obsessed by the idea of infected blood. During one of his last meals with his followers, he invited them to partake of their leader's body by eating sausages made from his own blood.

Professor Waite makes a conscientious, and often convincing, attempt to trace the connections between Hitler's private neuroses and his public policies. He also includes a wide-ranging and erudite discussion of why Germany followed Hitler. He is not always convincing, though. Hitler's decision not to press home the attack on Dunkirk is ascribed by Professor Waite to the fact that 'unconsciously he did not really want a victory'. Do leaders who lose always want to lose? Don't events sometimes defeat them?

Alistair Hennessy

Deserted Villages

The Spanish Tragedy: the Civil War in Perspective by RAYMOND CARR *Weidenfeld* £10

So far from exorcizing the ghost of the Civil War, Franco's death has released a flood of exegetical literature, and Raymond Carr, after forays into Latin America and fox hunting, now returns to a field in which he is undisputed master with a distinguished contribution. It is an 'analysis and a commentary' and so complements the updated reissue of Hugh Thomas's classic narrative. Readers of *Spain 1808-1939* will know what to expect: a superlative command of a wide range of sources, economy of style enlivened by occasional idiosyncrasies, a sharp eye for obscure but significant detail, an awareness of cultural nuance, a first-hand acquaintance with the country and its people, and an objectivity which in this particular minefield will bring down on him the abuse of both sides.

Interest in the Republic and the Civil War takes on new life now that Spain is to embark on another experiment in democracy; in any interpretative work we are bound to ask questions with an eye to the present and perhaps even to seek prescriptions. Have the communists learnt from their mistakes, as the attitude of Santiago Carrillo might lead one to assume? Have the military taken to heart the lesson of 1936? Have the anarchists a future? Can political fragmentation be avoided? What are the continuities of Spanish history; to what extent have priorities changed, and how radical have the changes since the Thirties been?

The tragedy of the collapse of the Second Republic can be put to good use if the lessons of its failures in treating those *cosas de España* – regionalism, clericalism, agrarian poverty, militarism, political factionalism – are digested. But to what extent are these still major problems? In the last 20 years Spain has changed more than in the previous 100, and a casual visitor might be excused for thinking that modernisation simply means homogenisation. The problems of Spain now seem to be similar to those facing other Western European countries: what appeared in the past to be specifically Spanish problems are so no longer. 'There is no such thing as *the* problem of Spain,' comments Professor Carr. 'Spain, like any other country, has problems.'

Take the case of regionalism, the resurgence of which has been the most striking as well as the most predictable feature of post-Franco Spain. A century ago federal republicans were right in their lunatic way – though for the wrong reasons – in believing that salvation lay in a federal solution. Spain has become a paradigm for the cultural pluralism now sweeping through the Western world, but regionalism can easily degenerate into nationalism, with all the unpredictability of attitudes fanned by historical grievances both real and imagined. With the influence which regionalism had on the fragmentation of parties during the Second Republic – and the expression of Basque nationalism today – Professor Carr is right to be apprehensive for the future. Whatever Franco's other faults no one could accuse him, given his obsession with unity and hatred of the dissolvent power of party factionalism, of not drawing lessons from the past, misguided though these may have been.

However daunting their lack of political expertise, Spanish politicians today can probably draw on a wider range of general experience than their forbears in the Thirties, inhibited as they were by a narrow republican tradition. Economic development over the last decades has increased the size of the middle classes (the novels of Galdós can no longer provide an insight into their mentality as they still could in 1931), so giving a firmer grounding for democratic government. The Republic was a republic of intellectuals, the political counterpart of the remarkable cultural revival which made Spanish thinkers respected outside Spain for the first time in over 100 years. But with a social base too narrow to carry through far-reaching reforms, the republicans took refuge in legalism and rhetoric. The former was understandable in view of a past history of violence and military interventions; the latter was less excusable as their extreme rhetoric was taken seriously by their opponents (and subsequently by many historians too). Their main weaknesses, however, were an urban mentality which gave them little understanding of the complexities and urgency of the agrarian crisis, and a doctrinaire anti-clericalism which, although it provided a firm 'agglutinate' for the republican coalition, alienated moderate Catholics. Republicans could never forgive the Church for dominating and warping the educational system.

Professor Carr argues that the Church was the major beneficiary of the Francoist 'crusade' and he has harsh words about its missing the opportunity of reconciliation after the war. This was only to be expected given the nature of the Catholic revival from the late 19th century (a defensive response to the *Libre Institución de Enseñanza,* which Professor Carr curiously on to mention); it had created a fiercely intolerant, hermetically sealed sub-culture, incapable of responding to the challenge of modernisation. Nothing in contemporary Spain has been so striking as the break with this tradition, both in the modernising technocracy of Opus Dei and also, far more significantly, in a radical Catholicism which outbids its Latin-American counterpart. A Catholic-Marxist dialogue, an impossibility in the Thirties, now passes without comment.

In order to eschew modishness, perhaps, Professor Carr has little to say about women. Nevertheless, as they comprised 50 per cent of the population, their influence, however indirect, was important in a largely priest-dominated society. Giving them the vote under such circumstances was tantamount to political suicide – as Allende was also to discover to his cost in Chile. With the gradual emancipation of women now under way (Spaniards, like the Portuguese three years ago, are bemused by Reichian analogies between sexual and political liberation), and a radicalised younger priesthood, clericalism is no longer an obsessive issue; nor does rural poverty assume the same dimensions, since migration to towns and Western Europe acts as a safety-valve for agrarian discontent. Deserted villages can often be a sign of new-found prosperity.

Professor Carr is sceptical in his approach to conflict between generations (a slippery concept which Spaniards tend to overwork); nevertheless, it seems to me to be crucial in accounting for the caution of older republican politicians and the radicalism of every youth movement in the Republic, whether on the Right or Left. Today, with one of the youngest populations in Europe, no longer immune to a liberated youth culture, this may prove to be a vital factor in political alignments, as it was during the Republic. Can Santiago Carrillo possibly run fast enough to catch up with Felipe González?

What of the military, whose restraint suggests that they have absorbed the lesson of 1936? Professor Carr is particularly good in this field. He understands the Spanish military tradition, the motives behind the officers' penurious patriotism, their austerity. It was the loyalty of the officers that bolstered the Republic rather than the mass rising of proletarian myth, and their intransigence confirmed Franco's worst fears by shattering the unanimity on which a successful *pronunciamiento* must be based. Many paid for their loyalty by being purged – a mistake Trotsky might not have made. Professor Carr stresses the debility of the Republican armies in attack, and queries the efficacy of militias except in defence. He has little to say, though, about the republicans' and anarchists' obsession with conventional warfare when a guerrilla tradition was to hand.

We have been conditioned to think that the Spanish Civil War was different. Was it? This book cuts through the notion that it was *sui generis*: newsreels do not reveal crack troops deserting, militiamen on the run, units decimated by VD. Moreover,

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'geographical loyalty', we are reminded was as likely a cause of affiliation as ideology and conviction. It is not palatable for republican sympathisers to consider that Franco's success both in war and as a modernising 'iron surgeon' cannot be explained simply in terms of a repressive system, but relied on being able to tap deep reserves within Spanish society. There is a positive side to his achievement which requires explanation and it is a merit of this book that it attempts the painful task.

This said, and demythologising done, the myth remains. It is as if Europe still has to believe in the simple verities of propagandists; that without them commitment must dissolve into indecision. For three years Spain was a surrogate for the rest of Europe. It titillated the thirst for horror, relieved the tedium of news bulletins and acted as a lightning conductor for pent-up forces; but it demanded few real sacrifices. Was the West's ostracism of Franco due to a dislike of his regime and its methods, or was it a way of expiating a sense of guilt? The irony of it all was that the Republic which the democracies allowed to die for fear of provoking a wider conflict could only have been saved in the end by the outbreak of a European war. Munich gave the death blow to that hope.

Tom Paulin

Irish Eyes

Tom Moore: The Irish Poet by TERENCE DE VERE WHITE *Hamish Hamilton* £7.50

Tom Moore's Irishness made him very famous in his day. He was born over his father's grocery shop in Dublin, went to Trinity College where he dabbled in revolutionary politics, and then crossed to England with some translations of *Anacreon* in his baggage. A diminutive charmer, he soon gained access to the most exclusive London drawing-rooms, and his sentimental songs reduced many a duchess to tears. He was a completely social being who, according to Leigh Hunt, was 'lively, bustling, full of amenities and acquiescences, into which he contrived to throw a sort of roughening of cordiality, like the crust of old port'.

His *Irish Melodies*, which were wildly popular throughout the 19th century, are mellifluous confections, all smiles, tears and fond retrospection:

> Erin! the tear and the smile in thine eyes,
> Blend like the rainbow that hangs in
> thy skies!
> Shining through sorrow's stream,
> Sadd'ning through pleasure's beam,
> Thy suns, with doubtful gleam,
> Weep while they rise!

The Irish weather, an exile's watery nostalgia, a vague but polite nationalism: all combine to create a sugary melancholy which delighted the fashionable and made Moore £500 a year for over a quarter of a century. These winsome lyrics, as Hazlitt rightly complained, converted 'the wild harp of Erin into a musical snuff box'. And when Jeffrey criticised them in the *Edinburgh Review* for concealing corruption 'under the mask of refinement', Moore, who was always conscious of how he appeared to others, decided to behave like a pasteboard gentleman and challenged the moral Scot to a duel. They met at Chalk Farm, raised their pistols and were promptly arrested by the police. While waiting to be bailed out of Bow Street they began to talk about poetry and became friends for life.

It was always Moore's intention to gain an important public position through the influence of the aristocrats he so assiduously cultivated, and in 1803, five days after the execution of Robert Emmett (a friend of his at Trinity), he set sail for Bermuda where he mistakenly hoped to make his fortune as registrar of the naval prize court. He visited New England, met with the usual rapturous reception, and affected a courtly disdain, noting that there was nothing to be seen in the streets 'but dogs and negroes', and the few ladies 'that pass for white are to be sure the most unlovely pieces of crockery I ever set my eyes upon'. Here, as Mr de Vere White points out in one of his few insights into Moore's utterly evanescent character, he 'writes as one of the establishment' – as someone whose merely token membership depends on an ability to season his witty conversation with predictable phrases like 'to be sure' which, by reminding his audience of his nationality, flatter its sense of amused superiority. As Hunt shrewdly noted, there was 'just enough of the Irishman in him to flavour his speech and manner'.

Singing sweetly at the centre of the English establishment, this 'innocent, good-hearted, idle fellow' existed for many years in a state of pleasing servility – he was 'always in a flutter about lords and ladies and lobsters'. Like any Irishman in English society he was expected to charm and amuse, to be just sufficiently the Celt without being offensive, and like Gulliver in Brobdingnag this small Dubliner believed he was taken seriously.

Moore's only place was on the fringes of the Whig aristocracy where, provided he could provoke their cultivated emotions, he would always be the recipient of a patronising tolerance. He transformed his country's political aspirations into lilting anapaests and managed to be popular in Ireland as a nationalist writer without ever offending any of the innumerable aristocrats that cram the pages of this biography. Crowds cheered him in the theatre, dinner invitations showered in, and the ladies doted on him – in Rome, Pauline Bonaparte showed him 'her beautiful little hands, which I had the honour of kissing twice, and let me feel her foot, which is matchless'. He dispensed superlatives wherever he went and received them back in the form of praise of his inimitable self. He seems to have been one of those deeply selfish people whose radiant self-love casts a brief, delighted spell on everyone they meet.

It's this, more than anything else, which makes Moore a disastrous subject for a biography – he lived so much in other people's opinions, and his personality was such a flimsy, frothy bundle of visiting cards and song sheets that it's virtually impossible to perceive any natural integrity in the man. He had an immense talent for friendliness – as distinct from friendship – and it was this dazzling superficiality which made him safe, emotionally undemanding and companionable. This Irish Skimpole was totally heartless, and yet by making the emotions wholly social he offered a persuasively pasteurised ideal of good nature. Byron described him as 'the best-hearted, the only *hearted* being I ever encountered', and told Samuel Rogers that he had only one friend in the world and 'that was Tom Moore'.

A surface charmer who shied away from pain and suffering, who avoided the deathbeds of his children and took some girls out to Vauxhall Gardens after Byron's funeral, Moore became the recipient of some of Byron's most famous letters. Byron poured out his jokes, his hangovers, his loves – 'I am just come from an hour's swim in the Adriatic; and I write to you with a black-eyed Venetian girl before me, reading Boccaccio' – and received in return a short and belated note of the kind they exchanged when they used to live in London 'and talk laxly, and go to parties'.

What was it in this professional Irishman that made him Byron's ideal confidant? For Moore, Byron seems to have been just another lord in his collection – on his last day in Venice he and Byron sat up until two in the morning 'beside the Palace of the Doges, drinking hot brandy and laughing over old times', but when Byron tried to persuade him to stay longer Moore refused and set off for Rome, never to see Byron again. Perhaps it was Moore's complete immunity to suffering, his genial and entirely public personality, which made him the right recipient of some of the greatest letters in the language. The case is puzzling and fascinating, but unfortunately Mr de Vere White's garrulous telegraphese doesn't begin to answer it. Instead, he complains that Moore's statue presides over the largest public toilet in Dublin. But, as Leopold Bloom mused, it seems appropriate enough: 'They did right putting him up over a urinal; meeting of the waters.'

Maurice Richardson

Pain Speaking

Obsessed by RONALD DUNCAN *Michael Joseph* £4.95

Why do so many autobiographies read so much the same? Partly, of course, because so much of human experience is common to the species, and the resemblances between one ego and another may overshadow the differences. Another reason is that most autobiographers tend to concentrate on what William James called 'the world of conceptions, or things intended to be thought about' as opposed to 'the process of our perceptual experience which is naturally a flux'. Here, perhaps, is the clue to Mr Duncan's apparent originality. He is one of nature's spouters.

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His personality is not unfamiliar. He has that quasi-hypomanic, heightened self-consciousness which goes with the theatrical temperament. He reminds you rather of one of those Edwardian literary men with a licence to live it up, a character from *Sinister Street* moved forward in time. His writing is not particularly distinctive. He often uses clichés. He babbles, sometimes embarrassingly, but his flux is continuous; at moments he gives you a feeling of that uncapturable continuous present.

Obsessed, which is the third instalment of his autobiography, is all about his love-affair with Virginia Maskell, the young actress whom he first met when she was appearing in one of his plays, *The Catalyst*. He was then in his forties; she was 20 years and more younger. He was married and didn't want to separate from his wife, Rose Marie, so he tried to arrange one of those have-your-cake-and-eat-it *ménages à trois* which, in England anyway, so seldom work. The story ended some time later with Virginia's suicide. The book is written as if it were addressed to her, like a long letter.

I kept wondering why I was not more moved by so much suffering. Mr Duncan himself, in a breast-beating postscript, complains that it reeks of self-pity and reveals his inability to assess the pain he was causing. Certainly one does get the impression, now and again, that a bit of a masochistic orgy may be going on. Here is a sample, taken at random:

> You were the untidiest person in the world with your own things; you never filed a paper or a contract. Your underclothes were shoved in balls in your drawers, your stockings were single, never in pairs; the inside of your handbags looked like a jackdaw's cache. Yet for all that there was nothing you enjoyed more than tidying up Rose Marie's cupboards. Do you remember how you spent a whole day going through her mending cupboard, sorting all her buttons and reels of cotton into different sizes and colours, then putting them in tins, labelling each so methodically? Those tins still carry your scribble on them. I saw Rose Marie using one only the other day. And so, at West Mill, you had everything out of that cupboard which hadn't been cleared out for 15 years . . . This was the sort of thing you did which broke my heart. You had the earnestness of a child. I suppose that's what innocence is. Afterwards I couldn't bear to open that cupboard again. That's one of the reasons I had it removed.

Mr Duncan doesn't take it as hard as this all the time. He cuts several capers, makes elaborate fun over having piles – which seem to have become part of the whimsical man-of-letters' stock in trade. There are some extra-domestic literary experiences, details of play productions, lunches and correspondence with T. S. Eliot, who advises him about his poetry. But these are all incidental. Attention is focused on Virginia. And she, poor thing, remains a shadowy figure, more shadowy and, with her deepening depression, infinitely more pathetic than Hazlitt's tough little prototypical inamorata in *Liber Amoris*.

It ought to be – and in a sense, of course, it is – a tragic story. But the purge doesn't work. Sometimes I begin to suspect that Mr Duncan, without knowing it, is celebrating rather than lamenting. The fact is that it's exceedingly difficult to be objective about these obsessional infatuations between different generations, in which gerontophilia acts as a powerful aphrodisiac, and projection and narcissistic identification can play important underground parts. A certain amount of clinical insight is required, though this, in turn, may freeze up the flux. What's really needed is genius – of the Gallic, specifically Stendhalian, variety.

Paul Addison

Hate Couture

Hitler's Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Gang by JILLIAN BECKER *Michael Joseph* £6.50

Jillian Becker's title points up an irony which she sees as central to her story: the resemblance between the mentality of the Baader-Meinhof guerrillas and the spirit of fascism which they claimed to be cleansing from the earth with pistols and bombs. In the Entebbe hijack last summer, when a number of Jews were taken hostage, one of the terrorists was a young German called Wilfried Böse. A survivor from the concentration camps confronted Böse with the indelible number branded on his arm, and remarked that it was difficult to believe that Nazism had ever disappeared. Böse replied that he was a member of the Baader-Meinhof group, and their aim was quite different – the marxist world revolution. 'To the hostages at Entebbe,' Mrs Becker writes, 'the difference was hard to see.'

Mrs Becker has previously written three novels, and her book is a heartening reminder that for a writer of intellect and versatility fiction and non-fiction are simply two different ways of creating truthful images. For her present subject she stringently observes the rules of non-fictional evidence, and there is never a suspicion that missing scenes or undocumented emotions will be fabricated in the props department. *Hitler's Children* is a tightly controlled narrative, where a social scientist would surely have produced a series of cross-sections, and the focus is psychological rather than sociological. For Mrs Becker, while describing very well the milieu and spirit of the times in which her brood was hatched, is determined not to explain them away as victims of society, nor to dignify them as representatives of ideas. No, she aims to demythologise Baader-Meinhof by getting to the intimate truths. Their claim to be friends of human liberation she depicts as a shallow rationalisation of destructive anti-social drives; Baader-Meinhof are to be seen as little scorpions of egotism, born to sting and poison.

The Red Army Faction, as they called themselves, grew out of the ferment in and around the Free University of Berlin during the mid-Sixties. With some German overtones, such as the influence of Hermann Hesse, the context was a familiar one in rich Western nations. Certain young people of middle-class origin, feeling themselves to be powerless and oppressed, identified capitalism as the enemy, the United States as its headquarters, and the Vietnam war as its greatest crime. Later, Israel began to be seen as the greatest crime and the Palestinians replaced the Vietnamese as the wretched of the earth. Marx, Mao and Marcuse were the chief prophets, and although the Baader-Meinhof group may have looked like anarchists, they always declared themselves to be communists. What distinguished the Red Army Faction was not their ideas but their readiness to pursue the revolution by violence. In 1970 they launched a campaign of bank robbery, arson and bombing, which led to several gun battles with the police. The ringleaders, arrested in 1972, were eventually gaoled after a sensational trial, and Ulrike Meinhof committed suicide in her prison cell; others continue the struggle.

Andreas Baader, we learn, was a pampered and utterly selfish mother's boy, a political illiterate who loved driving big cars dangerously, and wanted, as someone put it, 'to be Marlon Brando'. His lover Gudrun Ennslin, the daughter of a Protestant pastor, was a self-righteous dogmatist with a great capacity for hating those she considered morally imperfect. Deserting her fiancé, who killed himself, and her 11-month-old child, she moved in with Baader. Together they sought to educate orphans in state homes to rebel against authority – or, as Mrs Becker puts it: 'Baader and Gudrun, who each had an abandoned illegitimate child, enthusiastically took up the cause of damaged boys whose troubles had started with their illegitimacy and abandonment.' Ulrike Meinhof, conducting a savage vendetta against her ex-husband on grounds which she regarded as purely political, was determined to send away their two seven-year-old children to a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan, to be trained as guerrillas. But the plan was thwarted and the father regained custody.

Puncturing her characters with a thousand little stabs of ironic observation, Mrs Becker is frustrated only by lack of evidence about the personalities of key figures like the lawyer Horst Mahler, who was at first 'the chief organiser, theorist and tactician'. Mrs Becker writes so well that her readers may forget to disagree with her, yet there is something perverse about the trend of the argument. Let us imagine that all the members of the Baader-Meinhof gang were bundles of neurotic rage, proclaiming love, but driven by hatred. Even so, they cannot be written off merely as disordered individuals. Someone might write a book to prove that the militant suffragettes were inwardly driven by hostility to the male sex, and took up the issue of the franchise only as a pretext for spiteful behaviour. In every age personal frustrations will be channelled into politics, but the direction of anger is never random. The neurotics simply intensify anxieties which belong to their class and period; the anguish of the militants points to the discontents of the moderates.

When they were on the run, members of the Baader-Meinhof gang were continuously

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assisted by wealthy professional people who hid them from the police. The very lawyers who defended them in court shared their opinions. Mrs Becker writes satirically of the rich trendy Left, or 'Schili', of West Germany, for she detests vanity and double standards. But changes in social direction are no less real for being carried through by variously distasteful kinds of egotist. Morally, Baader-Meinhof were about on the level of Nazi street-fighters, but their social function was utterly different. The middle classes are normally very successful in transmitting their values from one generation to the next. But since the mid-Sixties there have been signs of a collapse of the will to keep middle-class ambitions going. In their alienation from consumer society, 'the Raspberry Reich' as Gudrun used to call it, Baader and his group were symptomatic rebels.

Neal Ascherson

Cancer Ward

Russia's Political Hospitals by SIDNEY BLOCH and PETER REDDAWAY *Gollancz* £6.95

The Politics of Solzhenitsyn by STEPHEN CARTER *Macmillan* £5.95

'I have a feeling the Bolsheviks are preparing some especially dirty trick for me,' wrote Maria Spiridonova, the socialist revolutionary, in 1918.

> It would be difficult for them to kill me, and to send me to prison for a long term would not do either . . . they will declare me insane and put me in a psychiatric clinic or something like that.

In 1836, the Tsar had dealt with the political protests of Chaadayev in the same way. He was declared insane:

> The author of this article suffers from derangement and insanity . . . The government in its solicitude and fatherly concern for its subject forbids him to leave the house and will provide free medical care with a special doctor . . .

The Russians are not the only people to have treated dissent as a form of pathological deviancy. The Habsburgs occasionally did it too: Princess Louise was committed to an asylum at Purkersdorf for an unsuitable love affair. In the sense perceived by radical psychiatry today, Western mental hospitals contain plenty of individuals to be classified as non-conformists rather than lunatics. But the scale of the Soviet practice of committing political and social adversaries for insanity, under the guidance of the famous Professor Snezhnevsky of the Serbsky Institute, remains the most atrocious perversion of the social sciences in their short history.

Dr Bloch and Mr Reddaway have brought out this very long and heavily documented account of the Soviet abuse of psychiatry to coincide with the congress of the World Psychiatric Association in Honolulu. The officials of the WPA have squirmed around for years to avoid a direct condemnation of Soviet practice: a clique of affluent old free-loaders has been unwilling to risk a row which might rend the Association apart and incur a Soviet walk-out. Now it looks as if their game is up, and that the WPA will do its duty.

The authors have data on 210 political dissenters committed to institutions, of whom a maximum of 10 per cent appear to have suffered from any mental disturbance, usually minor. They believe, however, that at any one time the special and ordinary psychiatric hospitals in the USSR contain over 700 human beings in this category: sane, imprisoned among the genuinely disturbed for indefinite periods, and without any effective legal resources to get their cases reconsidered. The long campaign for these victims ('a filthy soap-bubble launched from the British Isles', as *Izvestia* put it) has scored some relative successes. Well-known dissenters are no longer committed, and have been gradually released. But those without friends abroad or the right contacts within the USSR, religious believers, local nationalists, hippies or people simply 'inconvenient to petty tyrants', may still land up in mental hospitals. And the mentality which puts them there, the habit of classifying individualism as a sickness, is probably as strong as ever.

Gorbanyevskaya was committed in 1969 as a 'chronic schizophrenic' because she was convinced that her actions were right and were not illegal. Gennady Shimanov was told: 'Your religiosity is a disease: we will treat you.' Zhores Medvedev, whose commital in 1970 shocked the world into activity against the whole system, was told that doing private writing as well as his own job was a sign of split personality. The regulations for civil committal list as a ground 'hypochondriacal delirious conditions producing incorrect, aggressive attitudes . . . to particular persons, organisations or official institutions'. Professor Snezhnevsky lends his name to the concept that a person 'seemingly normal' can be suffering from schizophrenia when he commits 'socially dangerous actions'. Diagnosis without the aid of symptoms: another first for Soviet science.

The convenience of the practice is all too obvious, as Bloch and Reddaway point out, especially while the present Soviet leaders remain reluctant to expand the labour-camp system again. The fuss of an open (or even 'open') trial is avoided, the victim's incarceration can be ended or prolonged without legal procedures, and his beliefs are discredited as madness. It wouldn't be surprising to find that Brezhnev regards committal to a mental hospital as a humane, modern substitute for imprisonment. But foreign opinion has messed it all up. Normal Soviet psychiatric treatment can be warm, supportive and even adventurous in the best places. Now the activities of a small KGB-guided clique, beyond the control of the Ministry of Health, have brought world disgrace on the Soviet social sciences and continue to impede détente.

Buried in this vastly detailed book, there is one very cheerful story. Dr Petrova, working in a factory polyclinic, kept refusing to certify malingerers as sick. They were pals of her boss, the chief doctor, who promptly got her committed to a psychiatric clinic. Two thousand workers then signed a petition to get her out again, which extracted her after five months' incarceration; she then went on to sue the doctors who had certified her as a schizophrenic.

Solzhenitsyn, in his own manner, denounced the committal of mentally healthy dissenters as 'spiritual murder', adding that it was a crime worse than the gas chambers. This was in 1970, when he was in a passion of anxiety to secure the release of Zhores Medvedev. But, nasty as comparisons are, gassing 6 million Jews is worse than sticking sane people into psychiatric clinics. Solzhenitsyn struck out in generous fury, and his efforts helped to save his friend. The trouble is that Solzhenitsyn is now being offered to us as a political thinker. Remarks like that arrive pinned out in display cases, and marked 'prophetic'.

Stephen Carter has used all the available texts of what Solzhenitsyn has written to extract from them a coherent political approach (among those lesser-known texts, the unpublished passages which Khrushchev's censors cut out of *Ivan Denisovich* are the most startling, showing how deliberately Khrushchev tried to angle the book for his own purposes). He draws parallels from Russian intellectual history and tries to persuade the Western reader that the sage's more amazing remarks are sager than they seem, or at least excusable in the circumstances. Solzhenitsyn 'clearly believes that the best type of government for Russia is an authoritarian national government without political parties'. As he says himself, 'order is not immoral if it means a calm and stable system', and 'authoritarian regimes as such are not frightening' as long as their rulers feel responsible to some higher force (General Franco's clerical fascism, for example). Russia may one day save the world through a spiritual revolution, a new idea, perhaps carried by the elite of those who have suffered so much that they have transcended fear and desire. Marxism is always and at all times evil, a code of behaviour which must end in terrorism. The collective nation matters, and the individual can carry the collective guilt for the nation's sins. The West, rotten with self-indulgence, a place where children cheek their parents, where professors and journalists dance clumsily to fashion, may soon collapse.

Spread out by Mr Carter, we see a ragged, often inconsistent version of a line of Russian 19th-century thought. The Western intellectual will shrug: only people of deep ignorance and mental deprivation, living already in a world of fear and superstition about authority, could swallow this. Russians, or *Daily Telegraph* readers, for instance. He would be right and wrong: thousands, perhaps millions of ordinary people in the Western world shuddered at Solzhenitsyn's jeremiad and were impressed. In Britain especially, national chauvinism, discipline and moral absolutism are still attractive. But it had to be Enoch Powell who spoke like a true Englishman: 'Solzhenitsyn? No Russian has the right to give us lessons in democracy!'

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Eric Sams

Bird's Eye

Boulez: Composer, Conductor, Enigma by JOAN PEYSER *Cassell* £7.50

In these 300 handsomely printed and well-illustrated pages the background of modern music is brightly sketched in, and the works of Boulez are described and discussed in terms which the layman may well find illuminating, with copious musical examples. The main portrait is drawn from (if not to) the life, with loving care and attention to detail. The subsidiary figures, such as Leibowitz, Cage and Varèse, are clearly delineated and artfully placed so as to evoke and sustain interest. Yet in my view the picture is distorted. Its trivially subjective approach not only discolours and disfigures it, but deprives it of indispensable perspective.

The blurb thoughtlessly blurts out what is amiss. 'Joan Peyser is a journalist, musicologist and perceptive observer of the international musical scene.' Even so, her talents are arguably of, and manifestly in, the wrong order. Her musicology brings up the rear, which is not always the right place for it. We learn far too little of her quick ear, astute mind, and – if I read the signs aright – truly warm heart. Instead, the book was conceived by the observer and written (perhaps spoken, the shaky prose suggests) by the journalist. In the result, there's far too much of the glittering eye, the detaining hand, the confiding mouth. Within the quite far-reaching and broadly acceptable conspectus, there is a bird's-eye view obscured by flightiness and flutter.

The text has four damaging flaws: it tends to be self-conscious, gossipy, tasteless and humourless. A comprehensive sample:

> Taking the dust-jacket off my book *The New Music: The Sense Behind the Sounds*, Boulez put it on the oral-genital tome and said the sub-title would be 'The Sound Behind the Scents'. Such intellectual punning might be expected of a brilliant multi-lingual European.

One hardly knows which is the more dauntingly naïve: the critical judgment, or the slip of the tongues. That passage breathes the fragrance of the whole, about which Ms Peyser's publishers should surely have told her. But although Cassell recently paid massive damages for defaming a gallant sailor, they are still (on my reckoning) rather close to the wind. Perhaps that will boost the sales. As another earnest investigator asked the authoress, 'Did you ever find out anything about his sex-life?' The answer is nothing to speak of, and less still to write of; but that does not inhibit the flow of pert and impertinent speculation. We are not surprised to learn that Boulez has been at pains to conceal a lot of his life from his biographer, with whom he has sensibly refused 'to share facts, thoughts and feelings'. The effect is like Albert's reaction to the lion. To see Boulez looking so peaceful just doesn't seem right to Ms Peyser.

Personally I have much sympathy for the view that private lives are indeed relevant to public art-works. But that surely has to be argued, not just assumed, especially in the case of a modern composer much more concerned with sonority and structure than with Romantic self-expression. In any event, only dead lions are fair game; a live one, as Albert discovered, is entitled to peace and privacy. However exciting and stimulating Boulez may be as 'composer, conductor and enigma', he surely has some right to compose his own features and conduct his own affairs, and even to be enigmatic if he wishes, without molestation. The alternative is the biography and musicology of the gossip-column; and we are never quite far enough away from that, for example in interpreting *Le Visage Nuptial* from the expression worn by its verbal features. Students will begin to wonder whether each Boulez work also symbolises some personal peccadillo, and start scanning louche mags for such ads as *'Marteau sans Maître* seeks *Pli selon Pli* with view to *explosante-fixe'*.

Ms Peyser is all too often her own most effective parodist. Nevertheless, she and her subject each deserved a much better book. Later researchers will be in her debt; she has elicited and recorded much that is interesting and valuable about Boulez, his life and work. But the naïveté of judgment and utterance is finally self-defeating.

Jeremy Treglown

Such Style

Even Cowgirls Get The Blues by TOM ROBBINS *Corgi* 95p.
Raw Silk by JANET BURROWAY *Gollancz* £4.95
The Danger Tree by OLIVIA MANNING *Weidenfeld* £4.25

Tom Robbins, his bio-blurb reveals, is 'a former student of art and religion'. Having, at least on the evidence of this artless and (despite some lengthy metaphysical gropings) godless novel, put all that behind him, he has retired to rustic Washington State where he writes in a style aimed at what Sterne might have produced if he had been commissioned to revamp *The Lord of the Rings* with an eye to the higher porn market. This isn't intended as a compliment. Others, after all, have got there first, and the American critics who have invoked their names in connection with Robbins's ('Knowing like Pynchon, funny like Vonnegut, winsome as Brautigan') ought to have given them credit not only for that but for producing fictions which, among their other merits, are on the whole soon over.

Even Cowgirls Get The Blues by no means earns its 416 pages, and its diverse topics are as well-worn as its narrative mode – hitch-hiking, feminism, pollution, mysticism, the expanding universe. 'You've travelled your whole life without destination,' an advertising artist tells the Kerouac-groupie heroine. 'You move but you have no direction.' 'What is the "direction" of the Earth in its journey,' she sagely responds in the accents of the Psalmist; 'where are the atoms "going" when they spin?'

It's dangerous to quote from writing like this out of context, of course, because its movements of tone and deflatory jokes often turn what looks like schmaltz into a kind of retrospective irony. There's a good example of this now-you-see-me-now-you-don't trick near the end:

> Poetry is nothing more than an intensification or illumination of common objects and everyday events until they shine with their singular nature, until we can experience their power, until we can follow their steps in the dance, until we can discern what parts they play in the Great Order of Love. How is this done? By fucking around with syntax.

But as Swift always anticipated and Sterne in the end (or lack of one) discovered, irony is hard to keep up. Robbins's predominant manner, despite the increasingly sparse punctuating jokes, is one of remorselessly whimsical didacticism.

The story involves Sissy, a girl with congenitally huge thumbs, who finds herself working for the homosexual inventor of a female deodorant called Yoni Yum. One of his main outlets for the product is his beauty-parlour-cum-holiday-camp on a ranch run by the cowgirls of the title, one of whom seduces Sissy and organises a feminist takeover which is murderously suppressed by the FBI, though not before Sissy has herself capitulated to social norms by having her thumbs amputated. Robbins's problem isn't that he doesn't make the most of the possibilities in all this, but that he makes too much of them, particularly as allegory-fodder. Perhaps that wouldn't matter so much if his use of the cowgirls'-ranch scenario weren't so flagrantly pornographic. For someone writing on the side of feminism Robbins has an uncanny knack for male chauvinist trash: 'Moonlight fell on Bonanza Jellybean as she bent over the horse trough, still scrubbing out her panties. (A warm day in a bouncing saddle can really stain a girl's underwear.)'; or again, 'her breasts bounced like dinner rolls that had gotten loaded on helium'. When I was last in Washington State, feminists I met were proud of the fact that they had a woman Governor. The snappy answer to that one is: 'Yes, but you've got Tom Robbins too.'

Raw Silk, by contrast, is a genuinely feminist novel and, in its conventional way, an accomplished one. An American girl marries a gushy English scientist who becomes an executive in a Cambridgeshire textile firm which also hires her as a designer. Her husband and her rapidly increasing wealth combine to erode her anyway dimly worked-out religio-sentimental liberalism, and one by one her loyalties – to her daughter, to her husband, to a schizophrenic acquaintance, to optimism itself – weaken and fall away. Janet Burroway contrives things so that the benevolent, old-fashioned family firm the couple work for succumbs, in a rather over-tidily parallel scheme, to Japanese efficiency, and the novel has some sentimental patches. All the same, the disintegration of the marriage itself is described with a painful mixture of inevit-

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ability and local unexpectedness, and Burroway is consistently on-target with Oliver, the ratty, self-absorbed husband.

The background is well done, too. Burroway's textile factory has an authenticity which even Olivia Manning's similarly well-researched war-time Egypt finds hard to equal. *The Danger Tree* is the leisurely first part of a trilogy on the lines of her previous Balkan novels, and the reluctance of the narrative to take off is to a large extent compensated for by her vivid sense of the period and the place. All the same, her concentration on historical accuracy hasn't extended to fictional consistency – one character turns up as Trench from page 116 on, despite being referred to as Trent since the beginning. And if this unimportant slip is evidence of hasty writing, so too are the frequent passages when Ms Manning seems to have switched over to automatic pilot: 'The cases, mostly of pigskin or crocodile, were elegant and their owner, a tall woman in a suit of pink tussore, looked as elegant as the cases.' Such style!

John Carey

The Prudence Farmer Award

There's nothing like judging a poetry competition for making you feel small – especially when the field includes (to name only the runners at the start of the alphabet) Kingsley Amis, Alan Brownjohn, Robert Conquest, Donald Davie, D. J. Enright, Roy Fuller, Geoffrey Grigson and Ted Hughes. Faced with such a galaxy anyone not totally anaesthetised by megalomania will feel Prufrockian tremors. On the other hand, to buck you up there is always the consideration that, since no one (except George Watson) any longer believes that literary-critical judgments are objective, the losers will swiftly and sensibly ascribe your misprizing of their work to the vagaries of personal taste. So the universe may remain undisturbed after all.

To get on with it, then: it was an outstanding year for poems about things as opposed to people. Poets intent on getting their words to muscle into the pith and ply of physical objects provided some of the most vital moments. Ted Hughes's line (in 'Postcard from Torquay') about the seaside wind which 'slapped shots out of the stacked deckchairs' came high in this class – a seven-word excursion train which has you scuffing your feet in sand and home again in three seconds flat. As immediate in its different way was Christopher Reid's poem about a watch, 'Verge Escapement With Fusee' – glittering, miniature, and primed with hard words ('ooidal', 'abraxas') to keep you at bay, like the watch's untouchably intricate works: 'a silver case of fidgety/wheels, rich with activity'. In John Holmstrom's 'Brussels Flea Market' sympathy with things is stretched to imagining what it would be like to be a second-hand dinner plate – bought, soaped, and tasting gravy again through the cracks in your glaze: a vigilant, affectionate poem.

Whereas Holmstrom's gravy-swigging crockery was well on the way to being human, the poems centring on humans were best when about the dead. Elaine Feinstein's elegy for a father, 'Dad', lodged itself in the memory because of its first three lines:

> Your old hat hurts me, and those black
> fat raisins you liked to press into
> my palm from your soft heavy hand.

The power of that comes from its transmitting the faintly repellent feel of other people's intimacy through the moist weight of the dead hand and the handled fruit. The raisins sound like slugs; it would make you throw up to swallow them. But for the child they were a treat, a bond: and that makes us instructively aware of our unbridgeable distance from the poem's love. Another death-poem was by Craig Raine, who seems to me an immensely talented and unerringly rebarbative young poet. 'A Cemetery in Co. Durham' illustrates well his pitiless imagery, as he reflects on the municipal notice-board:

> & CHILDREN-IN-ARMS ARE NOT ADMITTED
> TO FUNERALS
>
> unless a father pays the bill
> for a satin box of buried treasure –
> the feel of a fontanelle, buttocks
> tender as soft-boiled egg, and all
> the inventory of little flesh.

Needless to elaborate there, I suppose, on the sources of one's alarm. But it's worth noticing that, as in Elaine Feinstein's poem, the merging of food and flesh is chiefly responsible for unsettling the stomach. David Harsent's 'Level 7', the third remarkable poem in this category, deals with the living, but only just. Portraying a terminal ward, its distracted style mirrors lives and memories falling apart, and awkward visitors: 'hands closing on one another, cut flowers staining their tissue'. That last damp detail smuggles into the ward's hygienic hush a suggestion of the fluids that exude from the dead.

Then there were the bird-and-animal pieces. Twentieth-century poets have turned to these increasingly, of course – partly because the non-human inhabitants of the globe seem more betrayed and ransacked, and so more in need of poetry, than before; partly because we need them. Their mindlessness rescues us, and lets us 'dance/Like a dancing bear,/Cry like a parrot, chatter like an ape'. Their freedom frees: 'No government appointed him', triumphed Yeats, writing of a squirrel. From the poems in the present batch, Roy Fuller's robin, 'vivid as a bobbin', in 'Digging in Autumn', had a more Christmas-cardy air than was good for him, and Craig Raine's dogs, in 'The Behaviour of Dogs', were a pretext for pelting the reader with vivacious imagery:

> Their feet are four-leafed clovers
> that leave a jigsaw in the dust
>
> They grin like Yale keys and tease
> us with joke-shop Niagara tongues.

Not much there about the dog's inner world, you might say: more a high-class cartoon film in words. But it's easier to disparage than create such images. As against Raine's dogs, Ted Hughes's bullfinch (in 'Bullfinches') had personality – arguably too much. He emits a mournful whistle, we're told, to make humans feel protective, so he can have time to filch the fruit buds and 'pack a summerful of apple power/Under his flaming shirt'. That certainly lets you feel the bulging compactness of bud and bird. But the half-whimsical personifying also diminishes: the bullfinch becomes a handy receptacle for human sentiment.

Which brings us to the winning poem, Peter Redgrove's 'A Roadside Feast', and my reasons for choosing it. First, it's inescapable: what happens in it can't help but grasp your attention. Second, it grows. Instead of pitching on and sustaining a single lyric note or mood, it takes hold of the reader's emotions and then changes them. You start by feeling resentment, pity, revulsion, and other pro-hedgehog passions. You end up a good deal less sure of yourself, with a grudging sense, if no more, of the practicality and profit of what has been done. So you are brought up against the limits of your fancied sympathy, and that is educative. Third, the language is searingly vivid; so are the rhythms, especially at the start, where the bustling, untidy but dogged movement (the relentless *He*'s at the line-starts) conveys the purposeful scramble of the killing. Fourth, the hedgehog remains a hedgehog. Though treated as scarcely more than an object, it has, by reason of its very apartness, more animal dignity than Fuller's bobbin-robin, Hughes's cute bullfinch, or Raine's joke dogs. The final sight of it – spines daggering a bit of clay – is more defiant than pathetic: a savage emblem.

Peter Redgrove

A Roadside Feast

He slaps the hedgehog off the road
He chivvies it off with scraping prongs
He pins it alive on metal points
The blood catches the starlight
He says you must watch for fleas and not
touch the vermin
He prods it down in the bank of clay
He stirs it round until it is an earth ball
Taking a twig he scrapes it off
Into the heart of the fire where it glows
And sizzles like a speeding cannonball
A high-pitched cry of juice from a blowhole
With his trowel he dibbles it out on a stone
Taps it and cracks it, the clay shards-off
He pulls them with scalding fingers
A roasting smell pays attention, we
lean forward,
Like a six-inch pig the naked food
Glorious with grease. He waves us off
Bake your own hedge-pig, he says.
I pick up a shard, daggered with long pins.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

John Coleman

Pride of Our Ali

The Greatest (A) *Empire; ABCs Fulham and Edgware Roads*
Lucky Luciano (X) *The Gate*
Confessions from a Holiday Camp (X) *London Pavilion*

Incredibly quick on his feet, both pedal and metric, is Muhammad Ali, and it seemed rather a shame that he chose to bring a squawking infant, Hana ('one year and three days . . . my number four daughter'), to the indifferent lunch and stunning press conference that followed London's first glimpse of *The Greatest*, a very mere movie. Although he diligently plied her with a teated bottle while fielding questions from several quarters and catching them in every way and sending answers speeding back in our several directions, he – I am pretty sure through no contrivance of his own – relied on her tiny presence as an occasion for great ad libs: certainly, ignorant of the size of the occasion, she came on like his severest critic. 'Would you say your daughter takes after you?' was one of the master thrusts delivered from the floor. After openers, and it began a thought tamely with us huddled, shrunk hawks tucking into our wine and melon (the melon was OK) while the giant dove arrived and was suddenly seated at the long table facing the lights, it became evident that Ali knew himself to be the total attraction ('I've made myself the most popular human on the planet . . . My charisma . . . my gimmicks . . .') and was quite rich enough now to be contemptuous of the obvious queries. 'I don't need any more fame.' 'I'm bigger than all Hollywood.' 'Al Capone, Hitler, George Washington, Einstein . . . I'm still there and I'm still pretty.' Yes: 'I changed the whole script . . . The wording had to fit myself.' He was sensible, articulate, and bored with the predictable. Last quote for the moment: 'Boxing and movies is nothing to do with what I'm talking about.'

And, of course, he was talking religion; everything so far had just led to the serious phase of his life; he – and how the hell can I tell how genuine he is? – will shortly be evangelising the world. It was about here that a few black brothers, exquisitely dressed and vowelled (as why not?), displayed some concern. At least one of them, in a cowboy hat of refinement, wouldn't mind if Mr Ali could be more specific; he was probably disturbed by a rare verbal blunder from the cat-bird seat, which had instanced Billy Graham and America the Beautiful, its tremendous automobiles, its highways, its Coca-Cola even; 'All religions are good if the people live them' failed to satisfy the behatted fellow, a day-to-day unbeliever. But, then, most of us present were wearing our cynicism like scent. Fair enough that he should feel incredulous when the Man announced, 'My number one goal is South Africa.' Tolerable that doubts spread when an Indian, of US origin, asked about the plight of his diminished people and received the response: 'Marlon Brando wanted me to do some *pro*-testin'.'

The point is that by now I was in something dangerously near thrall to the verbal dexterity of Ali and I suspect I was not alone. He has a kind of in-built *Beowulf* gift for alliteration ('weak for women' came at an unanticipated moment of self-revelation), he is swifter and straighter than one has any right to expect a hugely rich pugilist to be, he hid behind no one. If anything, his producer John Marshall, seated immediately to his left, looked now and then as if he wouldn't have been averse to the ground doing a swallowing job. Of course, the movie: *The Greatest*. With a script by Ring Lardner Jr and direction by Tom Gries – whom one had early cause to admire for his Heston film, *Will Penny*, and who died of a heart attack after completing this one – the auspices were not altogether bad.

But Ali, Ali in the flesh coping with a press-ride neither rough nor reverential, is much more significant than the boxer he plays for two-thirds of the film (a kid called Phillip 'Chip' MacAllister does a plausible impersonation of him when young): apart from that vocal tot, he is his alertest knocker. 'I've acted at random,' he said, 'that's all I've been doing for the last 20 years is acting.' So we go through a commercial, pop-song entry (road-work, slow-motion, could be selling deodorants for gloves) behind the credits into a little bad news about how even a black Olympic gold-winner can be treated: he is called boy, stands up in a restaurant when *any* whitey would have been invited to sit, is told by crumpled Ben Johnson (of Western fame), 'Don't make waves.' It is tediously predictable, the blonde tart escaped from by a Muslim-temple man, the cut-ins of real ring-stuff with flecked re-creations; a great quantity of material must be lying around somewhere where the actual Ali re-running a bleached version of his life spoke awkward truth. Once upon a time, he was Cassius Clay: and none the worse for it. I hate boxing, but have watched every one of his televised fights. It is strange and uncontrollable, what has happened to this mighty myth, but there is no way in which he is as white as Mr Gries's film paints him. Now, and one registers it with regret, he seems only on the road to hot-gospelling. To misuse a better poet than he is, was it for this the Clay grew tall?

Francesco Rosi's *Lucky Luciano* has been kicking its heels for a while now. Made in 1973, it is thanks to a new management team at EMI that the Gate is able to show it at full length, 115 minutes. Gian Maria Volonte once more proves what a superb actor he is, this time reminding one of Olivier burrowing into a role. Olivier is mostly still Olivier, whatever he enacts, but he is such a brilliant craftsman that one can be aware of this while enjoying him at, in, under, and around it. Volonte, a favoured performer of Rosi's, similarly stays Volonte while – to all necessary appearances – becoming someone other. This is not the best fiction/faction from Rosi, but it is sufficiently strong and intriguing to kick other semi-documentaries or open-ended films into the middle of next week (I trust that is not a prediction). Once again, Pasqualino de Santis's camera knows how to hold back, so that we are on the fringe of the spectatorship at crucial moments, urged to lean forward and part the heads in front of us. The fragmented story moves about in time and makes Luciano, the deported gangster with political muscle he probably could have done without, a possible victim of ugly circumstances he created as a young thug. As done by Volonte, he moves through Naples and parts adjacent with a doomed, steely calm, pursued over 15 years by one Charles Siragusa (himself, according to the credits), a top agent of the US Narcotics Bureau. Linguistically, the piece shifts in a novel way that is less than successful, breaking back and forth from Italian to English. Visually, it is purposefully misty, as if Rosi were trying on weather as a metaphor for dubiety: handsome, lost. But it is this director's strength to take on authentic enigmas, suggest lines of inquiry, and not be irritating because there is no resolution. *Confessions from a Holiday Camp*, one of a series raking it in at domestic box-offices, makes the *Carry-ons* feel like *King Lear*.

Boxing

John Rodda

Tight-Lipped

Sporting films for the commercial cinema are full of pitfalls into which producers must inevitably drop if they are to hope for a viable product. Even Leni Reifensthal and Kon Ichikawa left some fans disappointed that their particular Olympic heroes of 1936 and 1964 respectively did not get the deserved exposure. Any life of Muhammad Ali must falter in similar fashion, because the man was doing far too much outside the ring (cinegenic though all this activity was) to leave much space for his boxing.

Fight fans like nothing better than to loll back and see the re-runs of great championships, and those who see *The Greatest*, and have followed The Greatest's career, must wonder what happened to all the boxing. It would have been a dull movie if it had simply re-shown round after round,

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but Ali's fighting technique deserves a much closer, more clinical examination. In the match with George Foreman in Zaire there is a blurred feeling that Ali can lean away from a punch, but the only time we see the Ali shuffle is in a long shot after he has beaten Sonny Liston. It is these skills together with that left jab (never seen more clearly than in his second fight with Henry Cooper, which does not get a mention) that make the man the boxing giant he is still. Events outside the ring, however, move on at a bewildering pace and are difficult to get into any feasible time-span, while the clips of the fights are more an impressionist's montage than a solid stepping-stone job through his fight career.

The atmosphere of training, press conferences, etc., is reproduced accurately enough, though I missed the ranting humour of the man; somehow Ali was slowed down, too thoughtful in those earlier years, when really he had more bounce and breeze (and, of course, no waistline thickness, which could surely have been disguised by better editing). But why do boxing films have to do a clean-up job in the gymnasium? Only once did a man spit; Ali never (apart from fight clips) gargled between rounds; there was no resin, no grubbiness in the gyms, no smoke. Angelo Dundee, well-turned-out trainer though he always is, never went back to a dressing room unmarked by the sweat and water which any fight and any fighter produce.

The suggestion of shadiness about the Louisville millionaires who set the young Clay up is hinted at, but the film is tactfully reticent about the colossal sums of money Ali subsequently earned – and what he did with them. Ali has earned more than any living sportsman, but that is just one of the issues this screen biography prefers not to confront.

Theatre

Peter Conrad

Some Versions of Pastoral

Bandits *Warehouse*
Epsom Downs *Roundhouse*

Bandits is a good play with ideas beneath its station. It wants to become a B-movie. This demeaning ambition it shares with David Hare's *Knuckle*: that Chandleresque piece treated municipal corruption in Guildford; C. P. Taylor's new play explores petty gangsterism in Newcastle. Hare's play aped the gloomy and sleazy cinema of the Forties with a series of mobile interiors rotated to the sound of belligerent jazz; Taylor's script is cinematic in its fluidity, shifting by a process of association from one locale to another, and in its transformation of time into space: all the stages of the plot are represented simultaneously. In a neutral no-man's-land of linoleum, the victim lies dead, sometimes resurrects himself to join in the action, and the conduct of the trial is superimposed on the enactment of the murder.

Taylor's malodorous provincials have learnt their style of affluent venality from the movies. One of the thugs is watching *On the Waterfront* on television when summoned to organise the beating-up of a greedy colleague. A radicalised miner sentimentalises the brotherhood of the pits as 'like a war-picture'. A police inspector promises to conduct the murder investigation 'like the Mounties'. Other characters are transatlantic inventions, though their dialect is Geordie: the urban outlaw who says 'it gives you confidence holding a gun' is an American at heart, transferring the frontier east to the city.

Why this dependence on movies? Perhaps because the genre of political thriller, in which the investigation of a crime opens out into an anatomy of society, is essentially American, and has never acclimatised itself in England. English detective stories are pastoral. Their landscape, as Auden pointed out, is that of the shuttered vicarage or the straggling country house. The detective story is disquieting because it takes place in a closed and domesticated society, where all must share the indignity of being suspected, and this makes it a parable of our common guilt. But the milieu of the thriller is urban, 'an open society in which any stranger may be a friend or enemy in disguise', as Auden specifies. Chandler's Los Angeles is the perfect example: a transient encampment where all are recent arrivals, so that every human movement becomes mysterious. Taylor's Newcastle is no such place: not a wilderness of mean streets but a series of interiors (the lesbian schoolmistresses immured with their pets, the babysitter venturing downstairs for a glass of milk), as cosy in their dated shabbiness as Auden's village.

The toughs are amiably incompetent, their slatternly women engagingly innocent. The vice of the past (the play takes place in the Sixties) seems now as innocuous as virtue. The racketeers have been belittled by inflation, and their rapacity now sounds like petty theft: the accomplices are seen studiously dividing a pitiable pile of sixpences. Even the violence is glamourised by being set back a decade, and annexed to the sartorial grotesqueries of the period which the play revives: the racketeers are bizarrely picturesque in winklepickers and suits with louchely narrow lapels, while the tarts swagger in vinyl mini-skirts. The psychotic miner carries his gun more as a lucky charm than a weapon: it is a war souvenir, and has no bullets; when Hynes, the thug who calls himself a businessman, pulls his loaded gun, it is as a boastful symbol of wealth, another vulgar trinket like his gold cigarette-case.

Aptly, the 'bandits' of the title turn out to be not economic pirates, but fruit-machines, which appear, rusted nostalgically, lined up against the Warehouse wall as if in one of the pricier Chelsea junk boutiques; revealingly, when the identity of the murderer is at last disclosed, the play shifts from a study of criminality to one of adultery. Hynes is not executed by the gangsters he has double-crossed, but killed almost accidentally by a deranged cuckold, and the public debate contracts into a private quarrel. Taylor shackles political outrage to sexual jealousy by making the cuckold a convert to marxism, and setting him to denounce the parasitism of his quaking victim. This final scene is brilliantly acted – Bob Peck as Purvis plays terrifyingly with the gun, Paul Moriarty as Hynes loses his brilliantined swank as we watch and subsides into a whimpering wreck – but it salvages the political pretensions of the play only by turning the crime into a lecture. And even so it is ineffective: Hynes is too preoccupied with his fear to listen to the charges against him, and Purvis pulls the trigger in frustration when his victim fails to answer.

Howard Brenton's *Epsom Downs* is also a pastoral belatedly committed to radical politics. It is Frith's *Derby Day* plus marxism plus full-frontals. Brenton, it has been reported, chose to write about the Derby because it exhibits a festive society in which industry has been made to serve demotic fantasy. Though the race is organised with savage unscrupulousness, though the odds improvised by the bookmakers are a lesson in the play of market forces, though the wretched nags are the playthings of rich bitches who arrive on the lawns by helicopter, the Derby still offers to all the dream and the chance of enrichment. Brenton has found here, he believes, 'a metaphor for Britain'. He is not the first to have done so. Frith's painting of the crowd on the Downs, miscellaneously commingling rakes and acrobats, haughty young ladies and thimble-riggers, testifies to the Victorian sense of the Derby as a secular carnival, a Protestant saturnalia comically abolishing social divisions. For Frith it is an idyll, for Blanchard Jerrold in 1872 a school for the capitalist virtues: he saw in the Derby an effusion of the 'brave, contentious spirit' which made the populace keen for the race of life.

Brenton may be bolshier than the Victorians, but he is saying nothing new. He finds at the Derby evidence of a brave or desperate readiness to take risks which is the small man's equivalent of the heroic Victorian capitalism. In the sentimental anecdote at the centre of the play, a struggling family wagers its savings on the race, and is rewarded at odds of five to one. Lester Piggott unlocks their chains, and frees them from their Dormobile. Off they trudge into the mellow evening to buy aluminium ladders and a council house.

As they go, they are berated by the ghost of a suicidal suffragette, who had thrown herself under the king's horse at an earlier Derby. She rails at them for accept-

Benedict Nightingale is on holiday

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ing a fortuitous bribe from a society which wants to pacify them. Like the didactic murderer in *Bandits* she isn't answered, and for the same reason. Just as Taylor is not a surgical analyst of society but a nostalgic miniaturist entranced by provincial oddity and period grime, so Brenton is less a revolutionary than a radical sentimentalist. For him, the Derby still has its evasive Victorian meaning: it is a consoling intermission, a comic respite which in the end enforces the status quo. He knows he ought to find the domestic optimism of his characters idiotic because unpolitical, and invents a ghost to speak for his own uneasy conscience, but he can't help being moved by their acquisitive suburban dreams. All he has done is to convert Frith's pageant into a demo.

The characters of the genre painting are adventitiously equipped with ideologies and genitalia. The Victorian swell becomes a Labour lord who is also a notorious flasher. The heather-selling gipsy, who is 'on these Downs to make a living', as her mother tells her, peels off her pants and squats for a pee. The human horses come from *Equus*, but have been radicalised by nudity and sadism: one of them confesses to an ugly fantasy about killing a goat. Brenton's politics are unsound because they're sentimental, but also because they're surreal: his indignation generates a nonsensical extremism which turns cabinet ministers into transvestites (as in *Magnificence*) or, in this case, into scabrous loons, and radicals into mocking cartoonists.

Neither play has found a satisfactory form. A narrative of detection depends on concealment and exposure, but Taylor's cinematic simultaneity of action makes everyone eavesdrop on everyone else: the victim thus overhears the plot against him, and the baffled detectives are privy to the conference of gangsers, though they glumly pretend not to be listening. *Epsom Downs* suffers from a more damaging disparity of form: it tries to represent, with a niggardly company of nine not particularly versatile actors, a crowd of half a million, and does so by sending the harried performers off every few minutes for changes of costume: it is an unpeopled panorama, and the only sense of that epic multiplicity the Victorians found at the Derby comes when, during the race, a litter of betting cards, beer cans and sandwich wrappers spills down the greensward.

C. P. Taylor, aiming at something terse, harsh and brutal, has written a play which despite itself is luridly glamorous; Brenton's aim is comic multifariousness, but ideology reduces his crowd to a thin uniformity.

Among this week's contributors:

ALISTAIR HENNESSY is Chairman of the School of Comparative American Studies at the University of Warwick; he is at present working on the impact of the Spanish Civil War on Cuba.

JOHN RODDA is the Boxing Correspondent of the *Guardian*.

Among ERIC SAMS's publications are *The Songs of Hugo Wolf* and *The Songs of Robert Schumann*.

JEREMY TREGLOWN teaches English at University College, London.

Art

John Spurling

Very Middling

1977 Hayward Annual *Hayward Gallery; until 4 September*

The next worst thing to being left out of a mixed show of contemporary artists must be to be included in it. On top of the injury of being forced to defend your fragile identity against the competing identities of others is piled the insult of being judged as the mere fragment of some collective identity.

The Arts Council has done its level best this year to make the mixed show tolerable. Dividing the Hayward into 15 more or less equal and self-contained compartments, it has mounted two successive exhibitions (both selected by Michael Compton, of the Tate, together with two of the artists taking part, William Turnbull and Howard Hodgkin) and has promised others in the same conditions but with different selectors annually. The catalogue pointedly avoids starting any hares, though there is an information area in the gallery where visitors can bone up on individual artists. Can the Arts Council now put its feet up with a sense of quiet satisfaction? Not on your nelly. Battle has broken out over the choice of selectors and the very absence of an ideological approach. Three critics in particular (writing almost, it would seem, in concert, an embryo Gang of Three) have attacked those selected for belonging to a 'charmed circle' and for being middle-aged and dull. Peter Blake, one of the artists in the second show, has struck back with a framed letter on the wall of his compartment.

No one could deny that this exhibition represents some sort of establishment. Of its three selectors, Michael Compton is also responsible for the current show of *British Artists of the Sixties* at the Tate which features 16 of the 30 Hayward artists, including both the other Hayward selectors. One of these, the ubiquitous Hodgkin, was also on the selection panel for the *Tolly Cobbold/Eastern Arts Exhibition* now at the Camden Arts Centre, as was another Hayward artist, Michael Craig-Martin. Six other Hayward artists feature at Camden too, though only four (Denny, Flanagan, Hoyland and Milow) have made all three venues. But after all, somebody has to be established.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the first show was enough to sadden the heart of even such an enthusiast for the art of the Sixties as your critic. But then we are all *parti pris*: only three or four of that fifteen would have found a place in my charmed circle; and of those only Hoyland's set of energetic and still-fertile explorations of colour without form and Caro's grand, if cramped, *Tundra* (a sort of washing-line of billowing steel) escaped the general atmosphere of aridity and weary thumb-twiddling.

Am I lining up with the Gang of Three, one of whose complaints is that would they like to do the selecting? Peter Blake ends his framed letter with the words '. . . I wish you would look at the work and review it', and this, I fully agree, is the only criterion by which to judge artists, regardless of their generation, of who selected them or of whether there might be other artists who ought to have been shown instead. But this second show crystallises my suspicion that looking at the work is just what most of these artists do not want us to do; on the contrary they seem quite as much obsessed with incidentals as the most ideological critic. Consider Blake himself. His room is set about with small evergreens in tubs and on one wall hang 12 of his wife's dresses. The main works on show are three large figure-paintings begun in 1964 and still in a very raw state of incompletion, waiting to be overpainted.

Michael Craig-Martin's room next door expects, almost demands, an even more cursory inspection. Glasses of water are placed on bathroom shelves against slightly tilted different-coloured panels at the centres of four large, bare canvases; another four bare canvases have small, laughably bad landscapes (junk-shop trophies, presumably) let crookedly into their centres. The titles wink archly at the passer-by: *Just a Glass of Water*, *Just Canvas*, *Just Someone Else's Painting*. Quite so. Bob Law is showing five big white canvases with a thin biro line round the edge and one big black one. Stephen Buckley, to distract attention from the simple if heavy marks he makes on them, attacks his canvases, tearing them into strips, threading them through one another or coating them with wax. Even Howard Hodgkin, who paints bright abstracts with representational associations, would disguise his essential painterliness, if he could, with fake frames or genuine frames made to look fake.

Nonetheless there are exceptions to this fear of being serious, of making an unqualified image. Kitaj's *Land of Lakes* is a landscape without figures, in which a blue river snakes down the canvas beside a piece of orange ground, with low hills and a black sky behind. Its calm and powerful effect comes from the painting itself, uncontaminated by gimmicks, self-conscious simplicities or facetiousness. Hockney's portfolio of etchings makes an unfortunate return to his teasing, doodling manner of yesteryear, but the double portrait of his parents, seated uncomfortably on studio chairs, their flesh and clothing painted with a curious heaviness as if they were the idols of some ancestor-worshipping tribe, is unlike anything else he has done. Stuart Brisley's performance (now finished and not at all conveyed by the photographs on display) was a version of Pygmalion in reverse: clambering over a wooden scaffold which encaged his assistant, Brisley first coated him in plaster and whitewash, transforming a living man into an academic sculpture; then, having tied him up by the feet to look like the dangling body of Mussolini, he poured black paint over him, before rinsing off with a hose. A simple idea, but allusive, well-controlled and unquestionably serious. Everything, in fact, that one looks for from the middle-aged artist.

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Television

Ian Hamilton

Jarndyced

A friend of mine was boasting the other day that after a long career of fugitive insolvency, of final demands, seven-day notices, distress warrants and the like, he's finally struck graduation day: he'd started to get solicitors' letters from his own solicitors. And not just that; his loyal legal advisers were threatening to put the whole matter of his unpaid bill into the hands of *their* solicitors. Could I recommend a decent firm who'd fight the case? He envisaged that, with luck, the ensuing correspondence would become so tangled and expensive that they would all eventually agree a truce.

A feckless type, and not at all an ideal candidate for the compassion of BBC-2's new *Out of Court* series, which is a sort of *That's Life* for trainee litigants. People write in to report the raw deal they've been having, and the show's resident investigators proceed to 'explain and question the law' on their behalf. The explaining, by the look of things so far, will turn out to be more vigorous than the questioning. There was a lame interview with the Attorney General on the thorny matter of private prosecutions, but the real drift of the programme was towards handy tips for the mildly aggrieved. As such, it no doubt *will* be handy, but it's hardly late-evening entertainment. I'd have thought.

If people are going to ponder knotty points of law at 10 p.m. they are likely to prefer the soap-opera style of exposition adopted by *A Rough Justice*, BBC-1's latest family-firm saga. In its first two episodes, it has concerned itself with fairly routine generation-gap material; fiery young egalitarian fights fuddy-duddy law firm for the right to set up a Law Centre for the lowly and confused. The head fuddy-duddy just happens to be the radical's father-in-law, so there is plenty of domestic aggro to be tapped whenever the bewigged stuff starts to flag. On the horizon, though, there seem to be *Brothers*-style sub-complications as the minor characters begin to signal that they have lives of their own; it's a bit early, therefore, to pronounce. But it's not always possible to get rid of an air of contrivance merely by trying a bit harder – and so far there is no sign of the animating spark.

Festival 77 has dominated much of the week, the Jubilee ticket enabling the planners once more to dredge through the archives for forgotten goodies. In fact, this year's bygone material has been more imaginatively selected on the whole than the 40th-anniversary re-runs. Rather than piece together tantalising anthologies, the BBC has risked showing whole programmes – and mitigated the risk by shrewd choosing. Brian Horrocks's *World at War* item (BBC-2) would not have kept too many people in on Sunday night if it hadn't been about Arnhem – much of the fun was in squaring Richard Attenborough's glamorous film version with Horrocks's maps-and-ruler account of the event. It didn't square too well, though it should be noted that Edward Fox's performance was alarmingly corroborated by Horrocks's every gesture and expression; many other of the hapless generals were on show, but none looked as if he'd have survived a shoot-out with Hardy Kruger.

Similarly, the appeal of Colin Morris's play about a police interrogation, *Who, Me?* (BBC-2), was surely enhanced by having the piece plugged in advance as the true begetter of *Z Cars*. It's not easy nowadays to come across dramas in which the police are presented as 'real human beings', so there was a novelty in being invited to be shocked by these quaint, demotic bullyings. As it happened, the chief interrogator – faced with the task of breaking down three pasteboard thugs – found his fiercest truncheon to be that of Valley rhetoric. After several hours of wily intimidation, the Welsh sergeant is the first to crack: 'Have you ever thought', he hisses at one villain, 'that one day your soul will have to stand naked before your Maker?' Instantly, the hood has turned to jelly: 'What's the chances of bail, guv?' It's hard to imagine Barlow running his parish by these underhand techniques.

Jack Trevor Story has the job of writer-in-residence at Milton Keynes, and on Monday night supplemented his modest stipend by attacking his host town for half an hour in *Personal Report* (BBC-1). He laid on the crusty charm, and hummed tunes to himself in order to seem endearingly batty, but most of his assault on the deadliness of new towns was mechanical and sentimental – Milton Keynes was just another stop-off for the lacerated ego. As Story himself said, though meaning something else, it could have been anywhere.

Weekend Competition

No 2476 **Set by Mrs C. Goddard**

A sequel to *Gone With the Wind*, called *Tara*, is soon to be published. Competitors are invited to supply the blurb for the follow-up to any modern classic. Maximum 150 words; by 26 August.

Result of No 2473 **Set by Tim Hopkins**

The names of all large organisations are really acronyms. We asked you to translate them.

Report **by Spiro Keats**

Sterling Performance: Inventive, Riotous. One Kwid Each Attempt. Terrific Stuff!

PONTINS: Plethora Of Noisy Trippers In Nasty Shacks.
ALITALIA: Aircraft Landing In Tokyo. All Luggage In Amsterdam.
SABENA: Such A Bloody Experience. Never Again.

JOHN STANLEY

DUREX: Delicate Use Reduces Excessive Xeroptripsis.
WALLS: Will Anne Like Loverboy's Sausages?
WIMPY: We Include More Potato Yearly.

PETER RUMNEY

ALITALIA: Always Late In Take-off, Always Late In Arriving.
TWA: Try Walking Across.
RTZ: Rip-off The Zulus.

PAUL PASTOR

LYONS: Let Yesterday's Odious Nosh Stew.

A. BOTEMAN

SOTHEBYS: Selling Off The Heirlooms Enriches Blokes, You See.
OXFAM: Organised Xenophily For Amateur Malthusians.

JIM ANTHONY

W. H. SMITH: Won't Have Smutty Mags In The House.
LAING: Largely Alcoholic Irish Navvy Gangs.

SUE DE NIMM

LLOYDS: Lend Lolly On Your Dodgy Security?
MIDLAND: Millions In Deposits – Loans Are Naturally Denied.

BASIL RANSOME

WOOLWORTHS: We Overwork Old Ladies, Wickedly Overcharge, & Rule The High Street.
LAMBETH COUNCIL: London's Amorphous Mass of Badly Educated Twits, Hacks, Chronically Overpaid Underworked Nearly Certifiable Idiots & Layabouts.

J. Y. WATSON

ACCESS: A Credit Card Encourages Silly Spending.
NHS: No Hope of Surgery.

J. TIMSON

FISONS: Frightful Insects Spoil Our Nice Salads.

RUSSELL LUCAS

BOOTS: Buy One On The Sly!

PASCOE POLGLAZE

WATNEY: Weaker And Tasting Nastier Every Year.

H. WOODS

NUR: No Use Rushing.

R. BURNS

HAMBRO: High And Mighty Bankers Rule OK?

JAMES DOWELL

BP: Breathtaking Profits.

T. GRIFFITHS

CAMRA: Club Attracting Mostly Rowdy Alcoholics.

N. J. MILES

LONDON RUBBER CO: Little Ones Naturally Disposed Of; Normal Relationships Uninterrupted; But, Bratlessness Entails Rolling Carefully Off!

JETHRO B. TUCKET

ILEA: Illiterate Louts Explained Away.

A. D. BEROWNE

WORLD BANK: Well-Off Ruining Less-Developed: Bare-Arsed Neo-Kissingers.

GUDRUN FIRMANI

PLAYERS: Percolates Lungs And Your Entire Respiratory System.

ROGER DUNKLEY

HARRODS: Have A Rolls Royce On Daddy, Sweetie.
GUINNESS: Gasus! Doant Oirishmen No A Foine Thrink Wan Dey Get Ut??

GERRY HAMILL

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Tony Miles
Chess

No 46 **Other Russians**

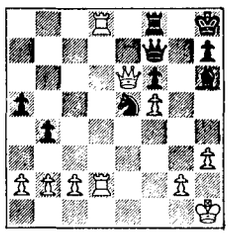
A recently concluded tournament in Leningrad must have given some encouragement to the world championship 'candidates'. First place was shared by the Soviet players Romanishin and Tal with 11½/17 with Smyslov (10½) third, but the main point of interest was that Karpov could only share fourth place (with Vaganyan). He won just five games, drawing ten and losing two (to Taimanov and Belyavsky). This is the world champion's worst result for a considerable time, his only other real failure since gaining the title being a second place to Torre (Philippines) in a short 4-player tournament in Manila last year. Russian players took eight of the top nine places leaving the foreign GMs to occupy their customary (for such events) lower positions. The rest of the scores were:- 6. Balashov, Taimanov, Kochiev (all USSR) and Ribli (Hungary)-9 pts; 10. Smejkal (Czechoslovakia)-8; 11. Belyavsky, Kuzmin (both USSR), G. Garcia (Cuba)-7½; 14. Vogt (E. Germany), Radulov, Knesevic (Yugoslavia). Gheorghiu (Romania)-7; 18. Mariotti (Italy)-5. Romanishin, it will be remembered, was an impressive winner at Hastings this year, but seems slightly erratic. For instance he lost no less than seven games in last year's Russian championship and scored only 3½/6 on board six at Moscow. On anything like his best form, though, he must have a real chance of challenging for the world title in three years time. One of his wins from Leningrad:

White: L. Vogt **Black: O. Romanishin**

1. P-K4, P-K3; 2. N-KB3, P-Q4; 3. N-B3, N-KB3; 4. P-K5, N-K5; 5. N-K2, B-B4 (preventing P-Q3); **6. P-Q4, B-K2; 7. N-N3, P-QB4; 8, B-Q3, N-N4; 9. N x N, B x N** (Now white could obtain a reasonably good position simply by 10. P-QB3, but he tries for more); **10. Q-N4, B x B; 11. Q x P, B x P; 12. Q x Rch, K-Q2; 13. Q x Qch, K x Q; 14. R-QN1, B x P; 15. P-B4, P-KR3** (Black has only one pawn for the exchange, but his dark-squared bishop is the best minor piece on the board); **16. N-K2, B-K6; 17. P-KR4, P-B5; 18. B-R7, N-B3; 19. P-N4, K-K2; 20. P-N5, B-N3; 21. P x P, B-Q2; 22. P-B3, R-R1; 23. B-B2, R x P; 24. K-Q2, B-B1; 25. QR-KB1, P-Q5; 26. N x P, N x N; 27. P x N, B x P; 28. P-R4, B-Q2; 29. B-K4, B x RP; 30. B x P, B-N7; 31. B-K4, P-B6ch; 32. K-K3, P-R4** (Not 32. P-B7? 33. B x P, B x B; 34. R-B2. Now white has no answer to the Q-side pawns); **33. R-B2, B-N6; 34. B-B2, P-R5; 35. B x B** (Otherwise . . . B x B and P-R6-R7), **P x B; 36. R x B, P x R; 37. R-QN1, R x P; 38. R x P, K-Q2; 39. R-KB2, K-B3; 40. K-Q4, K-N4; 41. K-B3, R-R6 ch; 42. K-N2, K-B5; 43. P-B5, K-Q5. Resigns.**

Problem 46

White to play. How should the game go? Entries to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 24 August.



Solution to Problem 43

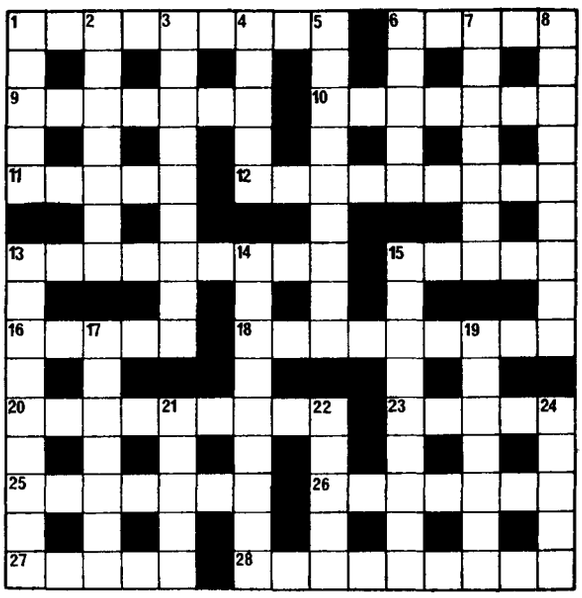
1. P-QN4, Q x NP; 2. KR-N1, Q x P; 3. B-K2, Q-B7; 4. B-Q3, Q-B6; 5. R-N8ch. Resigns.

Solution to Problem 44

1. B-K3! P-QR3; 2. Q-B5!! (not Q-R7, B-N2) and the threats to the KP and QR7 cost black a pawn.

Weekend Crossword 1228

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1228, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 23 August.



ACROSS

1. Player who makes opening blunder (5, 4).
6. Looked for in a book the bishop edited (5).
9. Generator which makes mother go without gin (7).
10. Holiday place in which I arrive incognito (7).
11. 'Fair Greece! sad —— of departed worth!' (Byron) (5)
12. Although a commentator in the end I appear in the final (9).
13. For man in pub trade is about to finish (9).
15. The best part for a group (5).
16. Something in a female which makes madame lose her head (5).
18. Force to study the sound of music (9).
20. Ship of the desert wrecked with a man inside (9).
23. Triumphs for birds (5).
25. Lighter returns in interpreting ignorance (7).
26. Expression of a determined champion (7).
27. Liberal isle becomes island of inquisition (5).
28. What tourist may take to make team bat so badly (9).

DOWN

1. Part of body which wraps me up in something warm (5).
2. Soldier one has to pull back into reserve position (7).
3. Disloyalty makes one eat cherry pie (9).
4. Appears vaguely like machines (5).
5. Horse with rider on (9).
6. Wretched housing which makes a town Liberal (5).
7. Priest who goes before the dead? (7).
8. Sketcher puts farm and street in composition (9).
13. Gunfire by the water in East Anglia? (9).
14. Cut short lengths for naval establishments (9).
15. Oddly schematic examination (9).
17. Team magazine (7).
19. Fruit given in a small case before a party (7).
21. Values boxes minus a hundred (5).
22. 'O, what a —— and peasant slave am I' (*Hamlet*) (5).
24. Piece of paper for one boy in the class (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1226

Prizewinners to No 1226

H. Thurburn (London SW3)

P. T. Smart (Burnham)

S. P. Fitzpatrick (Seattle)

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GRAD. LIBRARIAN, f., 25, reqs own rm hse/flat, London. From mid-Sept. Box 8422.

REPETITEUR with London Opera Company requires furnished accom. where some piano playing will be sympathetically accepted. References available. Please state facilities and terms to Box 3890.

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ALMOST FREE THEATRE, 485 6224. Henry Woolf in Heathcote Williams 'Hancock's Last Half Hour'. 'Marvellous' . . . Times. Thurs., Fri. & Sat. only at 8 & 10.30 p.m. Show runs for approx. 1 hour. Plus 'Happy and Glorious' 1.15 p.m. Mon.-Sat.

CHICHESTER. 0243 86333. 15, 16, 17, 18 August at 7.0, 20 Aug. at 2.0 'The Apple Cart', 18 Aug. at 2.0, 19 & 20 Aug. at 7.0 'Julius Caesar'.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE, 722 9301. Mike Leigh's 'Abigail's Party', 'Hilarious' Financial Times. Eves 8, Sats 5 & 8.

NATIONAL THEATRE, 928 2252. 'Volpone', 'Julius Caesar', 'Bedroom Farce', Glyndebourne's 'Don Giovanni', 'For the West', 'Judgement' & 'The Camilla Ringbinder Show'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded info.: 928 2256.

OPEN AIR, REGENT'S PARK 486 2431. 'Henry V', Evgs 7.45 Mats Wed. Thurs. & Sat. 2.30. With Clive Arrindell, Louise Purnell and Esmond Knight. 200 seats held until 1 hr. before performance.

ROYAL COURT, 730 1745. Eves 8, Sats 5 & 8.30. 'Once Upon a Catholic', a comedy by Mary O'Malley.

THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR, 95 61107. Till 20 Aug. 'Sleuth' by Anthony Shaffer, with Patrick Cargill.

Poetry

ARTS COUNCIL POETRY LIBRARY

105 PICCADILLY, LONDON W1V 0AU. Tel: 01-629 9495

Membership is free. Open to the Public. A collection of modern poetry covering the period from 1930 to the present.

Books are available for reference and loan. The Library is situated between Hyde Park Corner and Green Park underground stations. Hours: 10 a.m. to 12.30, 1.30 to 5 p.m. Mon.-Fri., Thurs. late night opening until 7 p.m.

Charles Osborne: Literature Director
Jonathan Barker: Poetry Librarian

Exhibitions

GANYMED GALLERY, 11 Gt Turnstile, WC1. 405 9836. Original prints by Moore, Boyd, Lowry, 18 & 19c prints by Daumier, Gavarni, Manet, Toulouse Lautrec.

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PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY, 8 Gt Newport St. WC2. 240 1969. Till 27 August 'Concerning Photography' an exhibition selected by Jonathan Bayer.

Meetings

ALTERNATIVE PATHS FOR PLANNING, 12 September, Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham; with Edward Goldsmith (editor, 'Ecologist'), Colin Ward (anarchist/housing reform), Gerald Foley ('The Energy Question'), Prof. M. W. Thring (morality/technology/professions). Is small beautiful? All views welcomed: 50/50, speakers/discussion. Exhibition, bookstall, video, pre-conference papers, wholefood lunch: £5 (students £2). Philip Brachi, (0602) 48248 ext. 2591.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, 58 *Eccleston Square*, London SW1. Sat. 13 Aug. 3 p.m. 'Open Day'. Tues. 16 Aug. 6.30 p.m. 'Introducing Buddhism'. All welcome. Send s.a.e. for full programme.

THEOSOPHY – Scientific religion and religious science. S.a.e. for pamphlets & book list. Meetings start September. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

Award

The Eric Gregory Award 1978

Annual awards of varying value for the encouragement of young poets. In 1977 five awards were made totalling £2,500.

A candidate must be British by birth, under the age of 30, and may submit a published or unpublished volume of Belles-Lettres, Poetry or Drama-Poems (not more than 30).

Closing date 31st October 1977, but earlier submission is desirable.

Details of entry from Awards Secretary, The Society of Authors, 84 Drayton Gardens, London SW10 9SD.

Courses

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Further information from: Administrative Assistant, Department of Historical & Literary Studies, Portsmouth Polytechnic, Kings Rooms, Bellevue Terrace, Southsea, PO5 3AT.

COURSES Cont. on p. 227

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The Polytechnic of North London

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